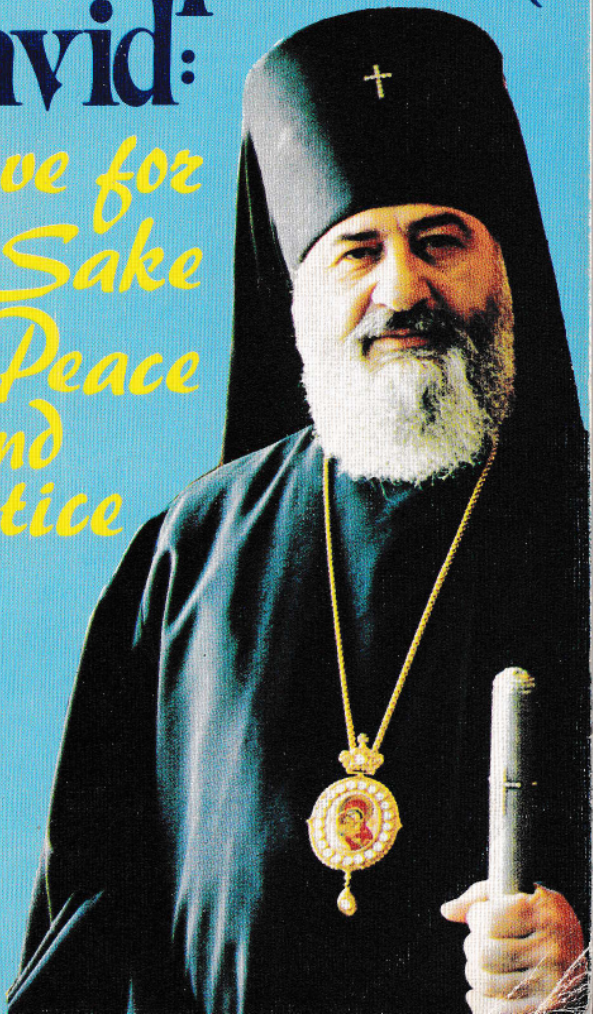
Metropolitan David:

Live for the Sake of Peace and Justice



Metropolitan David:

Live for the Sake of Peace and Justice

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МИТРОПОЛИТ ДАВИД:
ЖИТЬ РАДИ МИРА И СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТИ

на английском языке

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Metropolitan David of Sukhumi and Abkhazia, Georgian Orthodox Church, is a member of the World Council of Churches' Central Committee and a well-known champion of peace and amity among nations. An active participant in many world peacemaking religious forums, Metropolitan David has preached in the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. In all his sermons and in conversations with public figures there he has called for the prevention of a new war, upheld peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, and urged the believers to unite in opposing injustice.

His life has been an unusual one for a churchman. When standing among the grey-bearded Orthodox bishops he looks as if he were born to wear the priestly vestments, as One World, *published by the World Council of Churches, has written of him. Yet it took him nearly 30 years (during which time he worked as a dental surgeon) to make up his mind to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, both of the clergy.*

"I was seven or eight when my father fell seriously ill, and nobody but me thought he would recover," Metropolitan David recalls. "One day my uncle asked the doctor whether my father would recover. His reply was that he would do his best not to leave the son fatherless. His words have remained with me all my life. From that day I took a liking to medicine and dreamed of becoming a surgeon to treat the sick."

The boy's dream came true and for a long time he practised dentistry. But all those years he remained close to the Church with which his family had been closely associated. His father, grandfather and some other members of his family were priests (his granduncle was a hegumen at the Gelati monastery, and his grandaunts were nuns at the Teklati convent).

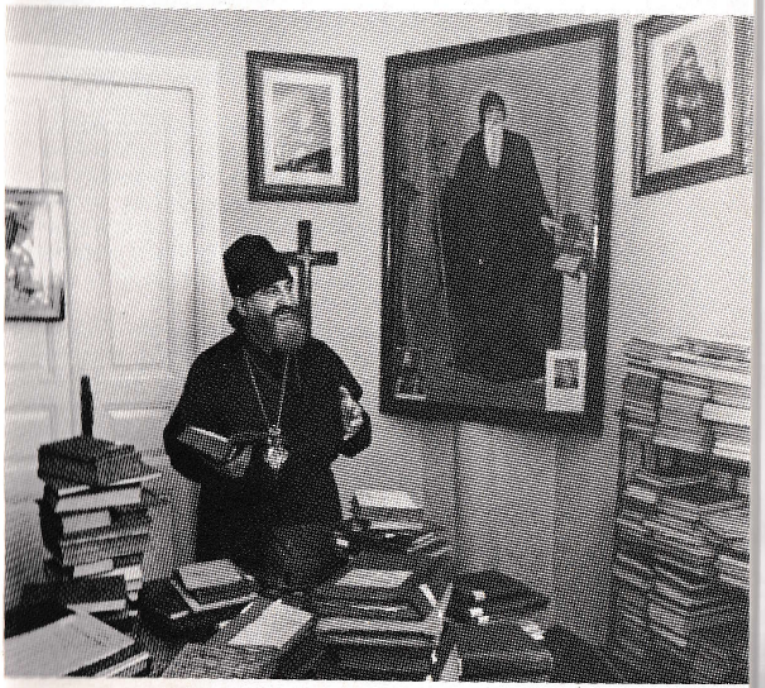
"My faith in God and my love for God have made me decide to dedicate my life to the Church and to carry on the work of my relations," says Metropolitan David. He studied the religious books in his father's library and passed the examinations for entering the Mtskheta seminary. After only two years he was consecrated a bishop and headed the Batumi-Shemokhed diocese. His love for those under his pastoral care and his devotion to diocesean affairs earned him the respect of all. He did much to improve parish life; under his personal direction a new church was built in Batumi and the number of cells at the monasteries was increased. His brilliant sermons became widely known and worshippers from remote parts of the diocese came to hear him preach.

But he was not only concerned with the affairs of his own diocese. He took to heart the sufferings of people everywhere. Reports of bloodshed and the killing of innocent people in any part of the world pained him deeply. Prior to his ordination he came to know several Vietnamese families in Tbilisi and helped them as much as possible. In their letters to him they addressed him as "our dear father" and signed "your children".

In the Abkhazia diocese with its cathedral at Sukhumi, now headed by Metropolitan David, in addition to Abkhazians, there are Georgians, Armenians, Greeks, Russians, Ukrainians, Jews and people of other nationalities. "Friendship reigns among them all," says Metropolitan David, "and a clergyman cannot but rejoice in this. People readily come to the help of one another and give support to those who suffer misfortunes. All this I have

constantly observed. In Georgia people of different nationalities have always lived in peace and friendship. It is our tradition and we have cherished it over the ages. Indeed, friendship and cooperation prevail in our multinational country; it is part of our life. The Georgian Orthodox Church, too, has contributed to this friendship among the nations."

Metropolitan David visiting the diocesan library



Metropolitan David often visits Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, as well as other cities and towns in the Soviet Union, and he makes frequent trips abroad. But each time, he says, he hastens home, to Sukhumi. "There is always much work to do in the diocese," he explains, "and far more now than before. The cathedral in Sukhumi is being restored and I would like to be present and watch the progress of the work. Many come to worship there. I want them to be pleased with it."

Georgia is situated at the junction of Asia and Europe, where in ancient times diverse civilizations met. Long before our era the groundwork for an early Georgian state was laid. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that the Georgian Orthodox Church should be among the first in Christendom.

Over a period of eighteen centuries Georgia had had to resist repeated enemy attacks. Throughout this period the Georgian Orthodox Church played an enormous role in preserving the language and national traditions of the Georgian people and in developing their written language the beginnings of which date back to the third century B.C. (the Georgian alphabet is among the fourteen ancient alphabets still in use in the world).

In the period of repeated foreign invasions the Church regarded it as its supreme mission to work and to pray for a brighter future for the nation. In this it was guided by the people's wisdom expressed in these words: "What is destroyed by enmity is restored by love."

The Georgian Church has inspired numerous artists and craftsmen whose works are not only part of the national cultural heritage but also rank among the world's masterpieces of art and architecture.

On the territory of present-day Georgia thousands of historical monuments have been preserved, many of which are world-famous. Visitors marvel at the fortress city of Vardzia cut out of rocks, with its churches, chapels, halls and living quarters. Among the outstanding monuments of

Church architecture are the Church of the Cross in Mtskheta, the Gelati monastery, the Bagrat Church in Kutaisi, the Sveti-Tskhoveli, Gremi, Alaverdi, David-Gareji, Nikortsminda, Kintsvisi, Ikorta Churches and the Sioni Church in Tbilisi. The frescos that have survived cannot but evoke admiration.

Although Georgia had been repeatedly invaded by outside forces, none had succeeded in destroying its Orthodox Church and making its people forsake their faith. In 1801 Georgia formed a union with Russia to escape extinction.

Today the Georgian Orthodox Church regards it as its mission not only to minister to the spiritual needs of its followers but also to work for universal peace. At world religious conferences and congresses its delegates call on all Christians to work for unity, peace and brotherhood. Iliya II, the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, has said: "Our Church, like all the Georgian people, has always stood for peace. And so it will act in the future as well."

A spirit of peacemaking permeates this book by Metropolitan David.

PREFACE

A garden round my house in Sukhumi is overgrown with vines whose grapes leave a lasting taste in the mouth. Bunches of grapes are within my reach and I can pick them easily. And I often wonder how much toil goes into cultivating the vines. I am not thinking about those that are found in my garden, but about those that grow on plantations. What a lot of work it takes to attend to a vine, dry and hard to the touch and so gentle inside where its life is hidden. No less toil goes into protecting the grapes, these blessed fruits of the earth, from hail, late spring frosts, storm and diseases. The labour of farmers, thanks to whom we have bunches of grapes, aromatic juice and sparkling wine full of the fragrance of my native land, surely ought to be respected and acknowledged. The work of any farmer, for that matter, is not easy, whether he grows grain or raises cattle. Millions of them cultivate grain, cotton and tea in the steppes of Central Asia, in the valleys of Armenia and in the boundless fields of Russia.

Work! Everything around us—houses. roads, machines, food are the products of work. The civilization of mankind has made great strides and attained levels unimaginable only a century ago. Still work, both mental and manual, is part of our life, our duty. And work is a means of man's further advance.

I say all this not because I wish to reiterate axioms. Thoughts on the dignity and necessity of labour make me meditate on the fate of millions of people deprived of peace, who are unable to enjoy the fruits of their labour. For wars, big and small, break in on their lives, and violence destroys the loftiest aspirations.

Why is it that there are countless outcasts on our planet, receiving starvation wages for their exhausting toil? Why is it that millions of honest and good, hard-working and courageous men cannot support their families? Why is it that so many children are starving to death? Why is it that there are whole nations languishing under the foreign yoke, doomed to a tragic life unworthy of man?

The more I think about this and commiserate with the oppressed in their misfortunes and with working people who are full of cares, whatever their nationality and convictions, the more strongly I feel that clergymen, in fact, all people must work to the best of their abilities to bring about an era of goodwill and prosperity. And that era will come, I am deeply convinced, only when

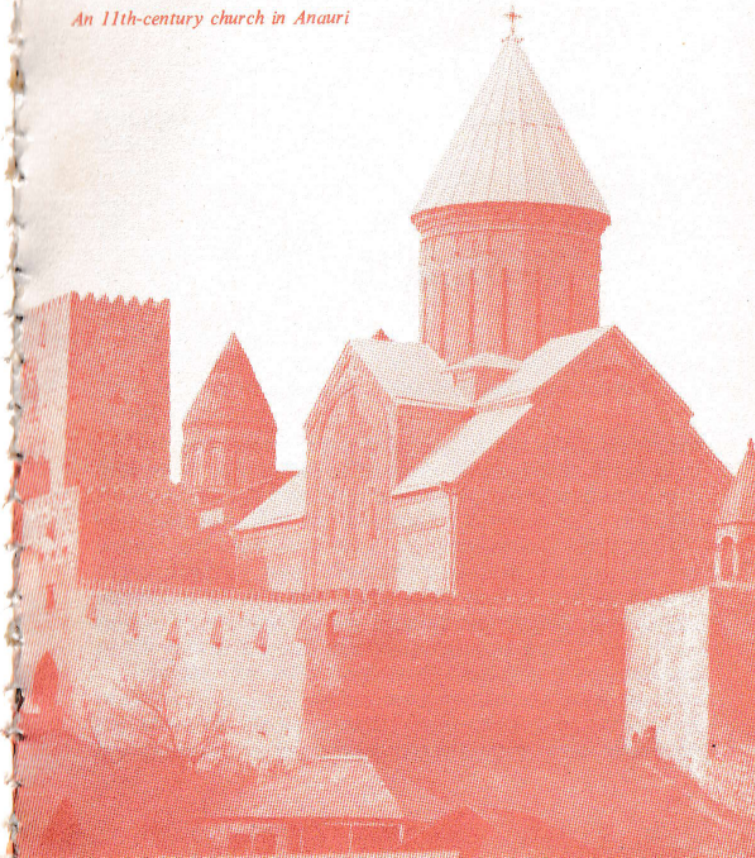
tranquility, security and peaceful labour are guaranteed to one and all.

I hope that the thoughts expressed in this book will evoke a response in the reader. I believe life is worth living if it is devoted to the service of man, to peace and justice.

Exhortations to Goodness

Let him eschew evil, and do good;
let him seek peace, and ensue it.
1 Peter 3:11

An 11th-century church in Anauri



Open Your Heart

"A certain man buried a lot of gold in the earth and came to look at the place every day. Another man saw this, came at night, dug out the gold and put a large stone in its place.

"The owner came to feast his eyes on the gold. When he dug out the stone instead, he sobbed bitterly. The thief came up to him and asked him why he was weeping. And the man said: 'I hid my gold here so as not to spend it. Now it is stolen, and a stone is put in its place'.

"Then the thief said to him:

" 'Why, that's all right then. Isn't it the same to you what is in the earth, gold or stone, if you are not going to spend it?' "

This centuries-old parable told by the great Georgian fabulist Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani in his book *Wisdom of Fancy* mocks at cupidity, meanness, narrow-mindedness and cunning. But its message is much deeper. People should not alienate themselves from others: their knowledge, abilities and experience should be put at the service of all and thus enrich our civilization's treasure-house. Profit-seeking for oneself can benefit neither the profit-seeker himself nor his neighbours.

This parable often came to my mind in my youth and perhaps helped me formulate my attitude towards people, towards life in general. Evidently it also influenced my choice of a profession. Any doctor, even one who

just begins practising, can relieve thousands of patients from suffering.

Today, more than thirty years later, I see many things differently. It is not just because I am now a clergyman and am concerned more with spiritual than physical suffering. It has to do with greater experience and knowledge that come with age. They help one understand many complex problems facing both individuals and nations. And I feel a need to share my thoughts, sentiments and the way I look at certain problems not only with members of my congregation but also with people living far away, in short, to open my heart to others.

I do it each time I deliver a sermon or talk to people. I try to be candid with all with whom I come into contact, and that includes priests of other religions. But life is short, and with the passage of time, there is a growing urge in me to commit my thoughts to paper. And so I have taken up my pen.

My book is neither written as a particular treatise nor designed for some special groups of readers. The problems considered here are, I believe, universal and should therefore concern all people. The most important among them is undoubtedly that of preserving world peace.

This is very much a practical problem. For the possibility of a world nuclear conflict breaking out is so real today that peace cannot be secured by merely wishing for it. It has to be worked for. Nobody should stand aloof from peacemaking, because never before had people and all life on earth been placed so precariously on the brink of annihilation. All this cannot but alarm us, believers and non-believers alike.

Nuclear death equally threatens the followers of all religions—Christians, Muslims, Judaists and Buddhists. Each of us living on earth is a father or a mother, a brother or a sister, and we all want to see our nearest

A am always with people, and this may be the reason why I don't feel my age," says Metropolitan David shown here with young people from different countries attending the Buenos Aires sessions of the World Council of Churches' Central Committee

and dearest ones safe and happy. A nuclear catastrophe does not discriminate between the human lives it destroys, and so people must not let religious, racial or personal differences disunite them in the effort to prevent it.

Will there be peace or war? Never before has this question been so acute. Possibly a durable peace is not to the liking of some people. More, it may be a hindrance to those pursuing egoistic goals. All this leads to growing tension in various parts of the world.

Alarm bells are tolling louder and louder, arousing more and more people to the war danger.

Has not our earth drunk deep enough of suffering? Has that not been the lot of many nations over centuries? Among those was my native Georgia, now one of the equal republics of the Soviet Union. In bygone days, since the establishment of the Georgian state, not a year passed without hostilities breaking out in the land. A Georgian going to work in the field used to take his family and sword along with him as well as farm tools. In this way he hoped to protect their lives.

Unfortunately, there are quite a few nations today who live in conditions of constant wars and privations. But it is of no use now to take into the fields one's family and arms. The flames of war can come from anywhere and reduce everything to ashes on all continents.

There is no doubt that the nuclear war threat is the most important moral and political issue today. And it becomes increasingly acute as weapons of mass destruction are being stockpiled and new, more sophisticated means of killing developed.

More and more clergymen are joining the peace movement which embraces people of different nationalities and convictions. Indeed, how can the Church stand on the sidelines at this crucial moment and not speak out in defence of peace? Like many others, I cannot be a mere onlooker, indifferent to the fate of humanity. My heart is filled with apprehensions for the morrow. I say to myself: my life is worth living if it is dedicated to peace, that is, to the good of my congregation, of all people on earth.

Love of peace is not expectation of some kind of eternal bliss: love of peace is above all love for men, and a sincere desire to bring about such a situation in the world in which war, as the work of evil forces, would be abolished forever. To this end we must pool our knowledge and experience, firm in our belief that a global nuclear catastrophe can be prevented.

To open one's heart to others does not mean just being kind and helpful to them in their everyday life. It also means to save them from atomic death, from all-consuming fires and from "nuclear winter". This is a noble cause which we should all work for. And one of the most important duties of a pastor, in my opinion, is peacemaking. One's contribution to peace is a sign of one's love for his neighbour in this complicated world today.

Face Reality

I believe the opponents of nuclear war have been prompted to action not so much by fear as by an awareness of the vast tragedy that may unfold as a result of a world war, which will be the most devastating and monstrous in human history, endangering the sacred gift of life itself. By what yardstick can people's suffering be measured if we fail to prevent it? And the most horrifying thing is that it can be caused by a human error or by some misanthrope who has just gone mad.

I cannot but shudder when I hear some people say that a nuclear war would be purifying for mankind in which the wicked would die and the righteous would survive. This is simply absurd. At times similar ideas are expressed by fanatics who have nothing to do with religion. But more often than not they are designed to calm the believers and thus reconcile them to the arms race and the nuclear war threat. And this threat has grown especially of late as a result of the stationing of new US missiles in Europe and of attempts to militarize outer space.

Our country is doing its best to reduce the war threat. Unfortunately, there has been no response to its peace initiatives in the West. The world would be much safer if all nuclear powers should follow the Soviet Union's example by undertaking the commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. Peace would be much more durable and people everywhere would feel more secure if the voice of reason should prevail.

In recent years we have more and more frequently invited experts on various political and technological issues to our peace forums. Their reports paint a truly horrifying picture: a global nuclear war will mean death of all people, with millions of them dying a slow and painful death.

I would like to mention the report by Dr. Wilfried Bach of West Germany, who attended the International Round-Table Conference of Religious Workers and Experts on "New Dangers to the Sacred Gift of Life: Our Tasks", held in Moscow in February 1985. Describing the effects of a nuclear explosion, such as blast waves and penetrating and thermal radiations, he said that nuclear strike targets would no doubt include, besides missile sites, first of all cities and then forests, especially in densely populated areas.

The nuclear death toll will be colossal. And what is in store for those who will miraculously survive? From the fires raging in industrial centres and from burning oil storage facilities, coal mines and forests a huge radioactive cloud of smoke and dust will form, which will screen out the sunlight, thus bringing about a new Ice Age, killing all living things.

Possibly, says Dr. Bach, a few may survive in shelters and may even live there for some weeks. But what horrors will they see when they finally emerge into the open? Everything around them will have been destroyed, and it will be dark and cold.

Just imagine that you have left the shelter. It is 20 degrees below zero. All transport and power facilities have been destroyed. You walk among the ruins and stumble upon a charred log, but it will hardly keep you warm for a day. If you return to the shelter, it will be cold there too. For its life-support system is designed to function for a short period of time only, and there is no power supply to recharge it. And all this time you are being exposed to radiation. Those suffering from radiation sickness are especially susceptible to cold.

And what about food? It will be contaminated with fallout. And water? It will be frozen. Such are the prospects that await mankind if a nuclear conflict should break out.

And not only areas adjacent to regions where the nuclear explosions will take place will be affected. Until recently some people thought that they could be safe by escaping from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere. But as Academician Raushenbach (USSR) has shown, the smoke from fires raging in northern residential and industrial districts can within a matter of weeks move to the southern hemisphere. It is possible that the immediate picture that will emerge following a nuclear catastrophe will not be as nightmarish there as in the northern hemisphere. But the consequences will be just as disastrous. Thus, for instance, even frosts of short duration will kill the vegetation, thus causing famine.

Can anyone, knowing all this, deliberately close his eyes to the problem of world peace? We have to face reality. We have to seek ways of reducing and then eliminating the threat of a nuclear catastrophe which now hangs over all mankind, over every one of us.

We religious workers in the Soviet Union have long been aware that it is our sacred duty to work for peace, for the preservation of life. We are also aware that our efforts alone are not enough. It is necessary that religious workers of all faiths should join forces in oppo-

sing war, evil and all that threatens life. In recent years the number of religious workers from different countries taking part in the anti-war movement has grown immeasurably. Many meetings have been held to discuss such vital issues as the moral and economic consequences of halting the arms race, the struggle against the militarization of space and such a new threat to the sacred gift of life as "nuclear winter". Participating in these meetings were clergymen and scientists from the Soviet Union, the United States, West Germany and other countries. And they practically came to the same conclusion: nuclear war means death, and the arms race is a race towards death.

It should be noted that many religious workers have become exceptionally well-informed about issues concerning the threat of nuclear war. And this is not surprising. People everywhere now have a better understanding of the nuclear threat and are prepared to unite their efforts to avert it. They are prepared to help stop the arms race and bring about a turn towards peace and security for all.

Save Our Homes

He that observeth the wind shall not sow;
and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.
Ecclesiastes 11:4

These wise words spoken many centuries ago remind us that passivity cannot change the trend of events and that sloth and apathy doom any venture to failure. This is a timely reminder, for today, as never before, we need to keep pace with life, be abreast of events and take an active part in them.

Can nuclear war be prevented? This question is up-

permost in the minds of people of all faiths. And my answer is: it can be prevented if every one of us realizes the importance of this task, if all of us unite our efforts in opposing war. Believers and clergymen can make a significant contribution to this task. Any clergyman who condones wars, the arms race and bloodshed is at heart far from the Word of God.

Even now you can find men who call themselves clergymen and yet support the policy of stationing missiles in Europe advocated by Washington and NATO. There are also those who try to justify wars of aggression, the invasion of Grenada and preparations for attacking Nicaragua. They have betrayed their spiritual values, and no religious doctrine can vindicate their stand. No religious faith advocates murder or the destruction of human life. Such persons have nothing at all to do with true faith.

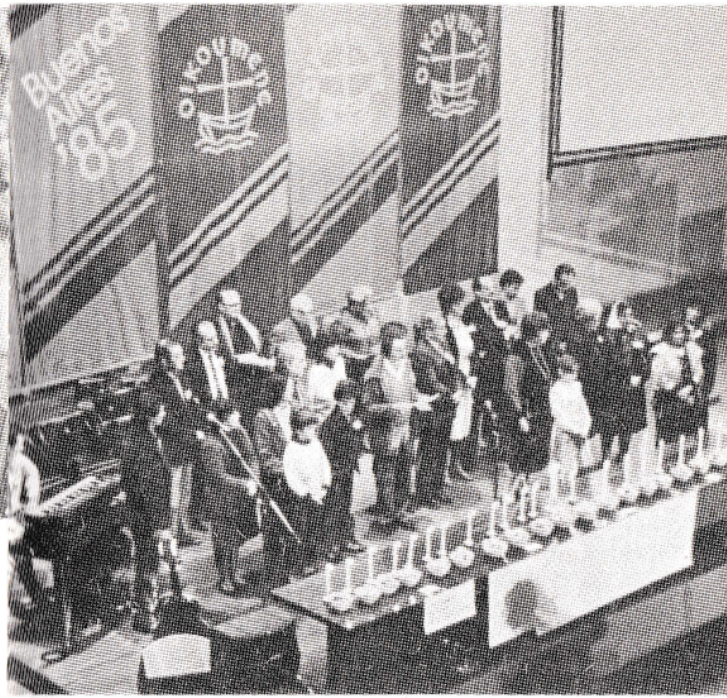
But their actions cannot hinder our peacemaking efforts. The numerous meetings I have had with followers of various faiths from many countries, in particular, at the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver (Canada), in 1983, have convinced me once again of the strong desire among believers to help avert a global nuclear catastrophe. What they say testifies to their resolve to work jointly for peace, despite their different faiths.

The anti-war movement originating from an urge to work for what is good and just has grown throughout the world. The Christians in this country have joined its ranks, confident of the righteousness of the cause, for they are prepared to support any actions that are for the good of man. True, clergymen in this country are in a better position than their counterparts in the West in that they do not have to overcome prejudice and misunderstanding in order to make their message clear, as is often the case there. As full-fledged peacemakers we

The opening of the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Vancouver, Canada, 1983

show solidarity with the Soviet peace movement and take an active part in it.

Our stand is being more and more appreciated in the world. I remember the reception we Soviet clergymen first got in the West when we travelled there and spoke out for peace. We were greeted with suspicion; we were abused and even accused of spreading communist propaganda! But religious leaders from many countries have since made their views clear on this life-or-death issue at world gatherings and conferences. An international conference "Nuclear War: Its Consequences and Prevention", held in Bellagio, Italy, brought together scientists and religious leaders from many countries, including nuclear powers. The conference participants represented the world's main religions as well as various research and public organizations. In their reports they showed that the way to greater security lay not through



A meeting called to express solidarity with the people of Argentina who had suffered much during the period of military dictatorship. The meeting was held within the framework of the Buenos Aires sessions of the World Council of Churches Central Committee. 1985

the development of more deadly weapons but through reducing their stocks.

Both clergymen and scientists expressed their readiness to cooperate in search of genuine peace for the sake of all mankind and of future generations.

They also pointed out that for their cooperation to be fruitful, every one of us should actively work for peace and oppose nuclear war plans, that every true patriot

should do his best to protect his nation from the threat of annihilation.

In 1984 the leaders of Christian Churches from seven East European countries and the United States held a discussion in Karlovy Vary (Czechoslovakia) on the subject of "Commitment of Churches to Peace and Justice in East and West". Despite differences of opinion on some matters, all participants agreed that they bore a great responsibility for peace for all. It was pointed out that efforts to militarize space, arising from the "star wars mentality", the development of nuclear technology for military purposes and the increased production and sale of arms absorbed vast resources which could be used to eliminate hunger and poverty in the world.

The participants also spoke of other, less visible dangers, such as the temptation to misuse power in various ways, the glorification of war, and the creation of an image of a "potential enemy", which was designed to justify dubious political moves. Therefore, the meeting called on all people, believers and non-believers alike, to reject doctrines that condone war and violence of any kind and the use of pseudo-theological ideals to justify total nuclear destruction. The participants were of the opinion that the use of religious motives in support of a policy of intimidation is offensive to any believer.

The participants in the Karlovy Vary meeting welcomed the agreement reached between the USSR and the USA to begin negotiations, for they were aware of the importance of accord between the two powers on the crucial issues of today. They sent an appeal to both the US President and the Soviet leader calling for an earliest possible agreement on a nuclear freeze, including a comprehensive nuclear test ban, renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons and a ban on the military use of outer space, including the deployment there of nuclear weapons.

As is known, the Soviet Union had already pledged not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and had called for the non-militarization of space and for a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Thus, the development of events depends to a large extent on the United States.

Take Responsible Decisions Now

Life's hardships and everyday work have taught man patience. He waits patiently until his hopes are fulfilled, until the clouds disperse, until winter turns into spring.

But time does not stand still. He who does not move with the times, who fails to foresee a misfortune and take measures to prevent it, is destroyed by it.

Today we must take real, effective decisions, and without delay, if we are not to be overtaken by events. Technological progress and computerization have not only improved man's well-being; they have also become a threat to life itself by giving birth to nuclear missiles and supersonic jets. And there are scores of thousands of them. Their number keeps growing; they are being transformed into a gang of cold-blooded murderers. True, they are harmless until someone presses the button. But they are there, poised to strike. And the only real, effective safeguard consists in making sure that they do not destroy the human race with the help of man himself.

There is a medieval Armenian fable about the spider. A spider spins webs in order to catch insects. But some spin so hard that they fall ill and die, leaving in their webs some dead flies—the fruits of their labour. Any work done merely for the sake of destruction is absurd; efforts made to develop instruments of death are wasted. Rewards received by conceiving evil schemes are worthless, and those who think evil are doomed.

This truth should be understood by all, and especially by those who derive profits from developing and manufacturing more sophisticated, more lethal weapons.

I often ponder on the tragedy that awaits mankind should offensive weapons systems be deployed in space.

So far all this is still in the planning stage, but the project is abhorrent to believers. All believers, and not just Christians, turn their eyes to the heavens when they pray. Imagine their horror when, lifting up their faces, they suddenly recall that nuclear weapons are stationed over their heads, ready to strike at their fellowmen.

"Human beings have always looked to the heavens for life; from on high we receive the sun's rays, the source of all energy which sustains life. We look to the sky for the rain which nourishes life. In the heavens we have sought the majesty of God's creation.

"Today we face the threat of space becoming a source of death and destruction.

"As people of faith, we regard this new sinister turn of the arms race as a sign of supreme human arrogance. It is high time for humanity to halt its race to oblivion and to remember that God created heaven and earth as a dwelling place for us."

These words were spoken at a round-table conference on "Space Without Weapons", held in Moscow in 1984. It was attended by 56 religious workers and scientific experts from 26 countries. They included Buddhists, Christians, Hinduists, Judaists and Muslims. And they were unanimous in stressing that there was no time to be lost, for huge sums of money had been allocated for research on space-based offensive weapons systems.

Their anxiety is well-founded. Space is less than 160 kilometres away from us. For most people in the world space is nearer than their national capitals.

Georgi Grechko, a Soviet cosmonaut, spoke at the meeting, and his words impressed me deeply. At present, he said, people living in areas remote from their countries' borders may feel more secure. But with weapons orbiting in space, no area, no city, no nation, no man can be secure. Distance loses its traditional meaning: there will be no "remote" areas, no strategically safe or strategically dangerous zones. For objects orbiting at altitudes of 200 to 300 kilometres are practically just above our heads. And the thought of weapons whirling over one's head can hardly make one feel secure.

Thus, the danger of a global war breaking out increases immeasurably. And it is only because someone, intoxicated with a false sense of superiority, might press the launch button. The point is that it becomes increasingly difficult to prevent accidents when there are weapons orbiting the earth.

During a service in the Sioni Patriarchal Cathedral

Why have peace champions all over the world waged such a resolute fight against the stationing of US missiles in Europe? Because a chance firing, someone who goes berserk, technical failure—all this can trigger off an armed conflict.

Earlier missile flight time was comparatively longer and it might be possible to prevent accidents. *Pershings* have reduced that time to six minutes and thus the possibility of averting any tragic accident decreases drastically. With weapons orbiting over the continents and oceans, things will become even more complicated. It might be difficult to find out what is happening—whether a strike from space has started or whether there has bean a technical malfunction.

Some people say that space war is the concern of the great powers only, and should an armed conflict break out between them it is they who will fight it out in space. But is this so? Does it mean that somewhere in remote outer space the belligerent countries will deploy combat spacecraft aimed at one another? Not at all. Militarization of space means the deployment of weapons in space for the purpose of hitting targets on earth. And the orbiting weapons will be passing over all countries without exception, thus equally threatening everyone. Any point on earth can be hit from space, and hit with great speed. As Georgi Grechko told the meeting, there are even now projects for orbiting space weapons at an altitude of only 100 to 200 kilometres above the earth, and for using laser weapons which would be extremely effective in hitting targets on earth from space. Every country, every populated area could become such a target.

The issue today is not about battles fought far away from the earth, the kind of battles one might see in science fiction films. It is not a case of space against space, but of space against the earth, against every human being, against every nation.

That is why our country so resolutely opposes any attempt to turn space into a base from which strikes could be made against targets on earth. That is why Soviet peace supporters consider that one of the most important tasks today is to ensure the non-militarization of space. And to carry out this task every one of us must act vigorously and without delay.

Unite in the Fight Against Evil

A true Christian must resist evil. War and all it stands for are an embodiment of evil, and so we Christians should understand and openly declare that peacemaking is our task. To condone that which can result in total destruction and bloodshed is to condone evil, and that is a sin.

"The chilly foretaste of a nuclear winter," said the Reverend Dr. Martin Baily (USA), at the Round-Table Conference of Religious Workers and Experts, "should not frighten us into inaction. Rather it should stimulate us to work as the one body we are."

Certainly, collective actions are necessary. And I can say that on our part we are always ready for such actions. Let me explain why. Detachment and feelings of estrangement are alien to Soviet people, and this is due not so much to any inborn characteristics as to the atmosphere of mutual help and cooperation that prevails between people of all age groups and professions and between the different nations and nationalities in the country. I remember reading in the newspaper a letter addressed to the people of the city of Bryansk by one Marina Mavrina. She was suddenly taken ill while passing through the city where she had neither friends nor relatives. Yet during her stay there she never felt lonesome. People unknown to her came to see her and

Afghan religious workers laying a wreath at the War Memorial in the Piskarevskoye Cemetery, Leningrad, together with other participants in the World Conference of Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe

to cheer her up; many brought flowers. Their friendliness and care helped her recover.

With the same spirit of fellowship Soviet people come to the aid of nations working for peace and justice, and are always ready to make common cause with all who come out against war.

Indeed, only when the peoples are united can they save our planet from destruction. This was demonstrated in the last war. It was the unity of the anti-war forces that ensured the defeat of Nazism. The Soviet Union, Britain and the United States, despite their ideological differences, were friends and allies in the Second World War. Their troops had often fought side by side, trusting and respecting one another and paying tribute to one another's courage and valour. And today, too, we can and must jointly solve the crucial problems

of our time; we must oppose our common foe—nuclear death—with our collective efforts and will. United, our countries can accomplish much. Hardly anyone would deny that.

Such views are shared by many Americans. During my trips to the United States, and there had been four in all, I was convinced again and again that people there realized how important it was that our two countries should come to terms on the crucial issues. I was told that by politicians, businessmen and farmers.

In 1984 a group of tourists from the United States visited Georgia. One of them presented me with a card on which is printed the following text in English and Russian:

A GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP
A GREETING OF PEACE

I am the Reverend Gordon Dragt, Minister of the Community, Church of Chapel Hill, located at 106 Purefoy Road in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA, 27514.

I bring greetings of peace and friendship from the persons whose names are printed on the back of this card. All of these people contributed money to send me on this pilgrimage of peace. Our hope is that friendship, goodwill and peace may be established between the peoples and the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union.

There are more than 150 names on the back of the card.

I was very moved. For I saw once again that neither times of tension, nor distances can divide people in their striving for goodness, cooperation and mutual trust.

More than once I was asked in the United States why the Soviet Union had rejected the very idea of rapprochement between the two countries and refused to cooperate with it in a wide range of fields. I was not surprised by the question. I know that many Americans

and millions of others, for that matter, have been influenced and confused by propaganda conducted by those who hate the Soviet Union and spread all kinds of lies about it. In reply I always pointed to the joint Apollo-Soyuz space flight. That project has demonstrated the benefits our two countries can derive from cooperation in space exploration as well as in various fields of science and culture. The Apollo-Soyuz flight is tangible proof of my country's readiness to enter into fruitful, peaceful cooperation with the United States. The skies must be kept free from spacecraft designed to kill and destroy; there should only be spaceships of friends ready to come to one another's aid. Such is the opinion of all of us in the Soviet Union, believers and non-believers alike.

Trust and Earn Trust

There can be no cooperation without trust. This is obvious. But one cannot simply demand trust; one has to earn it. Trust must be total and complete so that there is no room for doubt, which, once aroused, tends to grow quickly. Trust between nations should be built on honest intents and deeds, on good faith and strict fulfilment of commitments undertaken. To lose others' trust is to lose one's good name.

In his poem *The Gaucho Martin Fierro* the Argentine poet José Hernández writes:

There are many things that
are lost and found
In the daily affairs of men.
But one of the lessons I've
learned is this,—
And fix it well in your memories,—
If you lose your shame,
it's lost for good,
For you won't get it back again.

Honesty, conscientiousness and adherence to principle are the necessary prerequisites for creating trust. If nations follow these tenets in their foreign policies, relations among them will be friendlier and mutually beneficial and there will be a healthier political climate in the world.

Here I would like to recall two incidents which may serve as an example of how mutual trust can be built and lead to the establishment of friendly ties.

On one of my visits to the United States I met a young teacher from Atlanta, Georgia. She showed a keen interest in the way Soviet people live and spend their leisure time and asked me many questions about it. Some time later I received a letter from her in which she says that her meeting with me has made her decide to include information about Soviet people and about the Soviet Union in her lectures on international cultural ties. Her students, she says, are convinced that exchange of visits and personal contacts are a good way of getting to know people.

Contacts with others broaden our outlook and knowledge. Such contacts lead to understanding and trust between people. This is the way, I believe, nations should follow.

In 1984 a group of French tourists, employees of Air France, visited my diocese. They went to the cathedral where they talked with clergymen and members of the congregation. Upon leaving one of them said:

"This is the first time I've been to the Soviet Union. Many things, mostly bad things, are said about your country, and that's why I've always wanted to come and see for myself what life is like in your country. Young people in France know very little about the Soviet Union, and it would be a good thing if young people

would travel more and get to know one another better. I am glad that I came to your country and saw with my own eyes how Soviet people live. And I shall tell my friends and relatives about this. I think Soviet and French young people should learn more about one another, have tourist exchanges and establish friendly ties. If people of all countries travel and get to know one another, there will always be peace in the world."

Of course, contacts between individuals are not enough. Governments must also try to create confidence in their mutual relations and respond positively to initiatives aimed at reducing the war danger.

As for the Soviet Union, it is doing its best to make trust a norm of relations between states and peoples. This is evidenced by the conscientiousness and good faith with which it fulfils all commitments arising from generally accepted principles of international law and international agreements.

Moreover, my country has never imposed its foreign policy views and attitudes on other states. Has it not demonstrated again and again its readiness to enter into frank and honest negotiations and reach mutually acceptable accords?

I believe that the country which tries to increase and strengthen trust between states deserves to be trusted.

Cherish Peace

War entails countless tragedies: the loss of life, pain and suffering, oppression and despair. Anyone who knows what war is cherishes peace.

Last year, like many other countries in the world, the Soviet Union marked the 40th anniversary of the victory over fascism. In my meetings with the members of my congregation I heard many moving stories about the

hardships they bore during the war years and their feeling of elation when victory finally came, and about how they started to build a new life, a peacetime life.

Among them were war veterans who had taken part in fierce battles, former Nazi death camp inmates, mothers who had lost their young sons in the first days of the war and daughters whom the war had orphaned. The story each had to tell revealed deep sorrow and spiritual wounds that will not heal easily and at the same time also pride in the generation that had stood their ground.

Yes, in looking back today we see that the Great Patriotic War was a severe trial for our country's economy and defence capacity, as it was the Soviet people who bore the brunt of the war against fascism. At the same time it was also a trial for each of us, a test of our will and courage. From the first days of the war it became clear that the force fighting fascism was invincible: all the peoples of the Soviet Union, big and small, rose to the defence of their homeland.

Fighting among their ranks were the sons of my native Georgia. Even if one looks at the statistics only one cannot but be moved. Nearly 700,000 Georgian men and women were in uniform, the entire population of Georgia at that time being three and a half million.

One can come across many families in Georgia in which three, four or five male members had died in action in defence of the freedom and independence of their country.

The moment the enemy crossed the borders of our country the eight Gergaya brothers from the small village of Kariat took up arms. Seven of them lie in a common grave; one came back to console their grief-stricken parents. Melenti Chkhartishvili lost his whole family—his four sons and one grandson. All four sons of Sardion Gvelesiani fell in battle. Dopina Nikuradze, a peasant widow, saw her six children leave for the

front, her only consolation now being their photos framed in black. For years she hoped against hope that at least one of her sons would be alive and she would see him before she died.

Over half of those who left for the front never returned. But the enemy was prevented from crossing the borders of Georgia and turning its fields and orchards into ashes.

By what yardstick can we measure the sufferings of those who were taken prisoner by the fascists? Elena Prikhodchenko, a believer from my diocese, was twenty-two years old when she was forcibly taken to Germany and put in a labour camp. Twice she tried to escape, but was captured and brutally beaten. Finally she was sent to a death camp where she miraculously survived. Forty years have passed since then, but recalling that time Elena can hardly suppress her tears. In a trembling voice she recites the verses written by her camp mates, which convey a spirit of great courage and belief in our people's ultimate victory.

But many were my compatriots who did not live to celebrate Victory Day. I often think of those good and brave men who might be among us today but who were cut off in their prime by the enemy's bullet. They laid down their lives for their country's independence and for the freedom of other nations. So, today, forty years later, we have every right to say that we know the price of peace, for we had suffered and had seen others suffer in the last war. War, as an old saying has it, leaves its mark at the gates of every home.

There is hardly any need to ask Soviet people, young or old, whether they want war. On this question their attitude is one and the same: war is the common enemy of mankind; it must be abolished forever. Soviet people are united in their striving to avert a global nuclear catastrophe and they are fully determined to put an end to bloodshed everywhere in the world. For as Shota

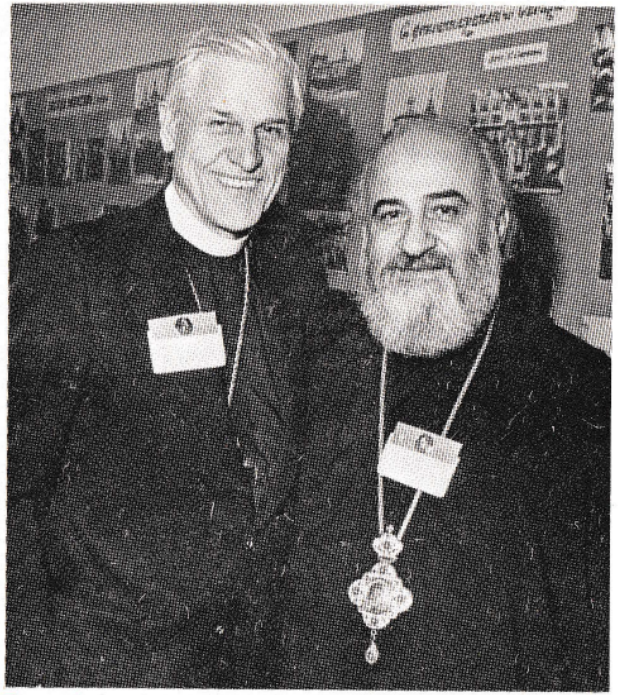
Rustaveli, the great Georgian poet of the 12th century, said, "A tiny spark overcomes and burns up great trees." Here in the Soviet Union all of us, believers and non-believers, people of different nationalities and professions, stand for peace.

For me, a servant of God, peace is not just the antonym of war, the absence of suffering and violence, hardships and privations; it is also a state of the soul not weighed down by tragic experiences or by apprehensions of an impending disaster. In praying for peace, we pray for the genuine happiness of all. And that is unattainable so long as there is fear of an all-consuming nuclear fire.

Spare No Effort to Preserve Peace

Peace forums of religious workers and experts, including round-table conferences, often brought two Davids together: Bishop David Preus of the United States, President of the Episcopal Council of the American Lutheran Church, and myself, Metropolitan David of Sukhumi and Abkhazia, representing the Georgian Orthodox Church. The fact that we have often met is not accidental. For we share a common conviction: we must spare nothing, neither time nor effort, in order to preserve peace on earth; to work for peace is the best way of serving people and resisting evil.

Father John Long, member of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, Roman Catholic Church, said at the Moscow Conference "Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe" in 1982: "The challenge of today urges us to mobilize our histories, our cultures, our values so that



Time and energy spent in peacemaking is our best contribution to serving men and resisting evil—such is the view of Bishop David Preus, President of the Episcopal Council of the American Lutheran Church, and Metropolitan David of Sukhumi and Abkhazia

working together—and I must insist on this 'together'—...we could plan the strategies and build the structures that will make recourse to weapons unthinkable, because such recourse will become an unnecessary and unworthy option."

To these words I shall add this: only when all peace forces and anti-war movements, including religious ones, work together can they help carry out this difficult task in the complex world today.

In addressing audiences abroad, I often stress the fact that the Soviet peace movement is of a nationwide character. The Soviet Peace Committee has branch offices in all the Union Republics and in 120 large cities and regions, and maintains contact with different sections of the public in more than 130 countries. An important role in the Soviet peace movement is played by the Churches in the Soviet Union, especially the Russian Orthodox Church. Over the past forty years it has taken part in more than 450 religious peace conferences and other peace gatherings. In 1977 the Russian Orthodox Church sponsored the World Conference "Religious Workers for a Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations Among Nations", which was attended by representatives of all the major religions. Five years later, in 1982, it organized another world conference "Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe", in which 590 delegates from 90 countries took part. In our country every effort is made to promote peace and rally peace forces throughout the world working to prevent the destruction of humanity.

Donating to the Soviet Peace Fund is another form of peacemaking that has assumed a large scale in the Soviet Union. I have been told that more than 90 million people have voluntarily contributed to the Fund since it was set up more than 20 years ago.

I do not know a single Soviet family who would not support the Peace Fund. Some people have given the amount of their daily and even monthly earnings to the Fund. When asked why they do it, they usually say that they know what war is like and see the threat to mankind posed by imperialism's policy, and so have decided to help preserve peace by giving as much as they can.

I know an old man who has in the last twenty years given part of his pension to the Fund. Large sums have

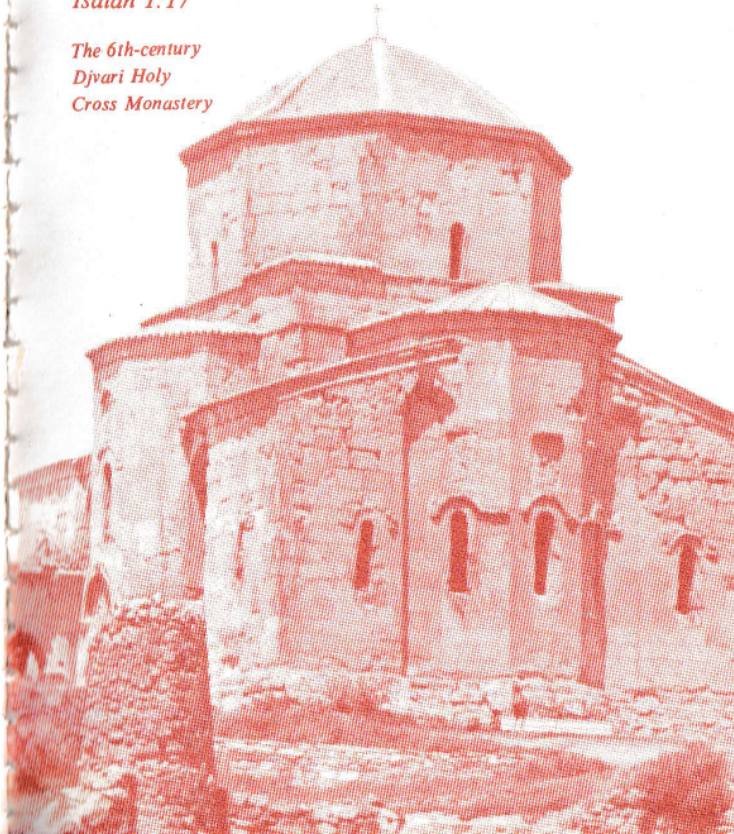
been donated to the Soviet Peace Fund by clergymen, including those of the Georgian Orthodox Church. All of them have been prompted by a sense of responsibility to society and to mankind as a whole.

On what is the money spent? Mainly it is used to finance the Soviet peace movement. But the Fund also helps the victims of imperialist aggressions and those of natural calamities. It has given a large amount of material assistance to the people of long-suffering Lebanon, to Ethiopia, Vietnam, Nicaragua and Afghanistan. In a word, the Fund is always ready to come to the aid of those suffering from misfortune or those in distress, wherever they may be.

The Fund also finances peace and disarmament research and puts out anti-war films and brochures. For it is just as important to prevent a global disaster as to come to the aid of those in distress. A nuclear war will have such horrible consequences that we must spare no effort to prevent it.

Exhortations to Brotherhood

Learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.
Isaiah 1:17



The 6th-century Djvari Holy Cross Monastery

Join the Struggle for Equality and Prosperity

Today, as the 20th century is drawing to a close, we often ponder on the plight of people living in various parts of the world. So many tragedies are taking place before our very eyes. We have entered the age of high technology and yet in many countries people suffer from hunger, diseases and poverty. We have learned to make efficient machines and yet in many parts of the world people earn their bread by doing back-breaking work, using the most primitive tools.

Ignorance, enmity, illiteracy, fanaticism—these are doing incalculable harm to mankind. But when at the same time a wasteful arms race is going on, the problems faced by many nations become almost insoluble. As a result, hundreds of millions of people are doomed to hunger and underdevelopment.

The United Nations, UNESCO and many religious organizations are in possession of numerous data showing the plight of developing countries. For example, the world now produces one kilogramme of bread per person per day, which is above the minimum requirement. And yet 15 million newborn babies and small children die each year of hunger and epidemic diseases. Just think, 40,000 children die every day because of poverty, lack of sanitary conditions and starvation.

And this is not all. A quarter of a million children go blind each year from malnutrition, and another 100 million children become crippled. Millions of children in

Africa and Latin America have never tasted dairy products.

Today every fourth person in the world goes to bed hungry; 1,500 million people lack minimum medical care, and the number of those who are illiterate stands at 800 million.

These figures can send a chill down one's spine. And what is particularly painful is the fact that in some countries poverty and hunger are deliberately perpetuated by those in power, and to stay in power they resort to violence and repression. Meanwhile, people living under anti-popular regimes and bloody dictatorships are like slaves, deprived of elementary human rights.

Similar wrongdoings had been wrathfully condemned by Biblical prophets.

"Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed;

"To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!"

Isaiah 10:1-2

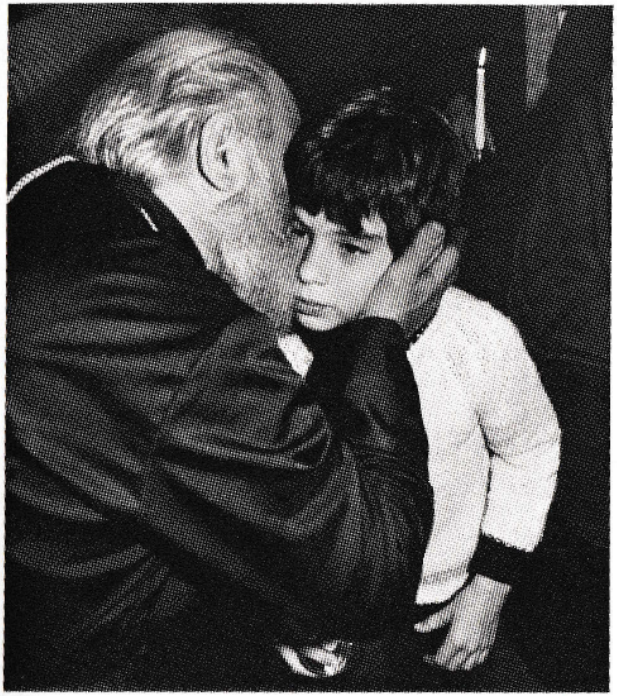
"Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.

"And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage."

Micah 2:1-2

These words express not only the Christian attitude towards evil, but also the attitude of all honest people towards the forces of darkness, to wrongdoers who hold the reins of power.

The fight against evil, which entails a fight against anti-popular dictatorships and racist regimes, is understood by every true patriot and citizen to be his duty. Throughout the ages folk heroes are those who do not



Metropolitan David with an Argentinian boy during a meeting on human rights in Argentina, held within the framework of the sessions of the World Council of Churches' Central Committee in Buenos Aires

spare themselves in their fight for the happiness of people, who stand for justice and often give up their own lives in defending the poor and the weak. People attribute countless virtues to them, though in fact they claim none. For what distinguishes them is their love for their fellowmen whose happiness comes before their own interests. History can provide us with many examples of men from various walks of life and of different outlooks and faiths, who endured severe ordeals and laid down their lives in order to free their people from

tyrannies. Today, too, there are such heroes: they are the courageous Haitians whose struggle for democracy is respected by all, the patriots of Chile and the fighters of SWAPO. Blessed is the nation that has heroes ready to sacrifice their lives for a better future of their people. Such a nation has a great future.

Concern for people and a desire to do everything so that their aspirations may be fulfilled, and more active involvement on the part of Christians in the fight for justice, freedom and human dignity, out of love for the oppressed and persecuted—such are the ways to brotherhood. Today many theologians, particularly in Latin America, consider brotherhood to be all-important. To be a believer is to put into practice the Biblical teachings on righteousness and justice.

I know that the fight against reactionary dictatorships, racism and inequality is growing, and those taking part in this fight are becoming increasingly determined. Among their ranks are also clergymen who are true patriots. Their work for the happiness of the people and their call for faith in the victory of the forces of righteousness are a notable contribution to a just cause.

All of us hope for a better future. And in order to turn this hope into reality, a great battle is being waged by the forces of righteousness against the forces of evil and tyranny. It is natural for those who are pure in heart, uncorrupted by the poison of hate, to join the fight in order to help bring nearer the happy time when there will be equality and prosperity. And then, as the prophet Isaiah said, "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isaiah 32:17).

Speak Truth for All to Hear

To fight against evil today is to fight against the arms race, racism and apartheid, epidemics and hunger. We clergymen are expected to take part in this fight, to speak truth for all to hear. For the Bible teaches us to practise our faith in everyday life (Matthew 25:35-40).

What position should the Christian Church take on the crucial problems facing mankind, which are the cause of so much pain and suffering? Should not the work of the Church become a still more significant factor in the anti-war movement? Can the Church reconcile itself to violations of human rights taking place under despotic regimes?

These and many other questions were discussed at the Sixth All-Christian Peace Assembly that I attended. The participants, representing different denominations from many countries, were unanimous in emphasizing the need for people of different political convictions and faiths to work together for peace and social justice.

From the point of view of theology Christians should cherish these ethical values which will bring them closer to the Kingdom of God: justice, love of one's neighbour, equality, peace, fellowship, righteousness and social commitment. Respect for these values makes an ideal mode of life. Thus, it is only natural that ways leading to disarmament, to the abolition of apartheid and poverty and to an end of violation of human rights are indicated in the documents of the Sixth All-Christian Peace Assembly.

The Assembly made yet another point. In their peacemaking work clergymen should not concentrate their attention on the tasks of ending the arms race and averting the nuclear threat only, although both are undoubtedly of foremost importance today. They must also respond to the cry of millions for bread, jobs and housing.

In working for a better future we should honestly appraise our work at present as well as in the past. Over the centuries the Church has always regarded it as its main mission to help the poor, the sick and the outcast. But alas, it has not always asked itself whether the achievements of human civilization, politics, economy, science and technology have benefited the oppressed and the suffering, or whether they have furthered the ambitions of ruling groups with their thirst for power and wealth, which impose such a heavy burden on nations, on people of all races.

A striking example of how the Church reconciled itself to the imperialist policies of colonial powers is a theological dissertation written by a black Christian from Africa in 1742 at Leiden, the Netherlands. It was called "Slavery Does Not Contradict Christian Freedom". In support of his thesis the author adduces the usual argument that the blacks, as descendants of Ham, are destined by God for slavery (Ham shall be a servant unto Shem and Japheth, his brethren—Genesis 9:25, 26, 27). And to justify slavery, the author says that with inner, Christian freedom one can well dispense with civil liberties. Indeed, to serve one's neighbours is a Christian ideal, and this can best be done by a slave. This black theologian had thus taught to look at himself with the eyes of his white masters. In other words, he had fully accepted the perverted conception of freedom.

Christian theology has been used in attempts to legitimize racism and the inequality of women. That there should be rich and poor is said to be in the nature of things and is pleasing to God, which is a dubious thesis, indeed.

Until quite recently the Church was hardly aware that its spiritual values got badly entangled with elements of capitalist society, even in that period when the capitalist world entered into an open alliance with fascism, when the most aggressive form of imperialism up to that

time—nationalism—manifested itself in a cynical contempt for and the systematic destruction of that part of mankind which it disliked. The Church, at the beginning at any rate, was blind and only gradually began to resist the dark forces of fascism endangering the world.

This historical background, which we recall with renewed sorrow forty-one years after the victory over fascism, shows that a radically different approach is required of the Church. That the words of Christ—"Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40)—are a call for struggle against unjust, inhumane regimes has been understood by many Christians already after the Ecumenical Conference in Geneva in 1966 and the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Uppsala in 1968.

Opposition to racism, neocolonialism and neofascism as well as to the degradation of the environment is now widespread among Church circles. One thing is clear today: the Church cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that there are still places on earth where some people live in luxury, while others die of hunger, some act arbitrarily and with impunity, while others are assassinated or executed, and still others turn into outcasts. How can anyone be reconciled to this?

It is irrelevant to talk about some "economic advantages" or other material benefits provided to part of society by a regime under which there is no genuine justice and equality. And the question is not only the number of people who may enjoy such benefits. For people do not live by bread alone. No less important for them is the feeling that their life and work are illumined with the hope for a better life and genuine human happiness.

This truth accords with our hearts' prayer, and we ought to say it for all to hear.

Support the Struggle for Democracy

On one of my trips abroad I met a young priest from Haiti. I will not mention his name here for fear of getting him into trouble. In our long discussions we covered a wide range of subjects. They included the clergy's involvement in the work for world peace and security and the contribution they could make to shaping the future of humanity.

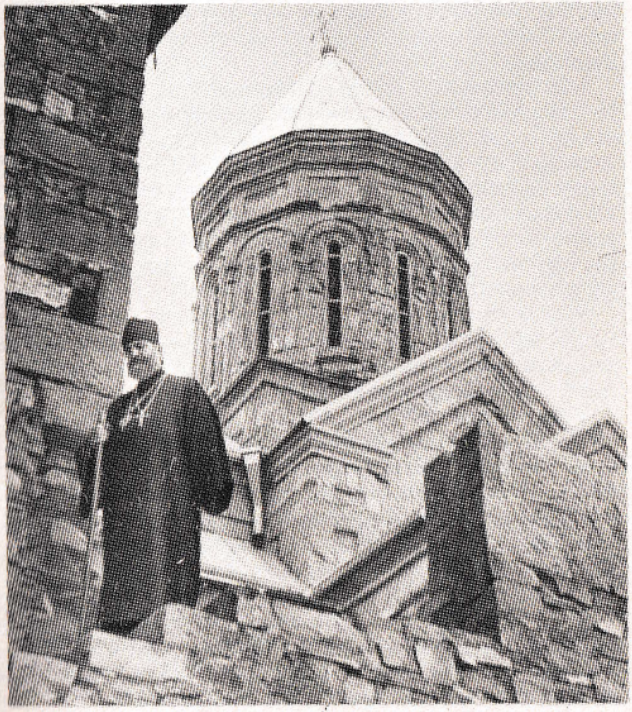
Despite the difference in our age and views on some matters, we agreed that it was the duty of the clergy of all faiths to help people sort out the complex moral issues of today, get to the roots of social and political problems and condemn injustice and evil.

Of course, we could not help discussing the plight of the Haitian people and the situation in Haiti where every inch of the earth was drenched in the blood of its patriots. It is a tragedy when a whole nation not only suffers from poverty but is also oppressed and deprived of all rights and of the word of truth, when the seeds of goodness are destroyed at the will of the rulers, just as they start to germinate. Here I involuntarily recall the words: "So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power..." (Ecclesiastes 4:1).

Thus, because of a handful of people who are neither honest nor honourable, who have no other interest than enriching themselves at the expense of others, professing virtues which in their heart they despise, whole nations have been languishing in poverty and oppression. In Latin America, Africa and other parts of the world many nations live under despotic regimes backed by imperialism. For the majority of the people living in countries where there is no equality, where there is little prospect of change for the better, life is bitter, indeed.

But man has always resisted cruelty and violence, evil and the forces of darkness. So I was not surprised when my young Haitian friend told me that many clergymen in his country had repudiated tyranny. Their stand is rooted in their faith. For had not the Apostles spoken of justice and honesty? Does not the New Testament teach us that there is peace where there is justice? Love of

Metropolitan David in front of a church in the village of Martkoli



man, and peace and justice go hand in hand. Those who are for justice want to see peace and love prevail in their land.

This is confirmed by the history of many nations. My native Georgia still honours the memory of the priest Teodor who called on the people to rise against their oppressors and who died in fighting them. In Russian history there are many instances where the clergy took part in the struggle of the people for independence. And there is nothing surprising in this. For in so doing they were fighting against evil, against those who invaded their land.

I do not know if anything has happened to my young Haitian friend but I know what has happened to many others who, like him, opposed Duvalier's regime. Among them is the priest Antoine Leroi, who founded many churches and schools in Haiti and sponsored the Christian charity centre in Port-au-Prince, where poor people could get an education. This man was arrested at the airport upon his return from a trip abroad, and his whereabouts is still unknown.

War is an evil, and especially when it is waged by a tyrant against his own people. There is no cause more just, and no duty more sacred than that of keeping the spark of goodness and belief in justice alive.

When I think of such people I often recall the story about a noble youth called Danko told by the great Russian writer Maxim Gorky. In order to help his fellow tribesmen, he tore out his heart, which burned in the palm of his hand, illuminating the way to freedom. The legend tells about the magnanimity of men with burning hearts whose lives show the way to a better future.

History proves that goodness and righteousness always emerge victorious. So it will be in Haiti. I believe this, just as I believe that the human spirit is invincible. And in order to help bring nearer the day when brotherhood will prevail on earth, all of us should support the struggle for democracy.

Remember the Lessons of the Past

The struggle for a way of life that is worthy of man has been waged for thousands of years. Biblical scholars say that they often find parallels between the distant past and the present and that this gives them a spiritual insight into many of the pressing problems of today.

No less valuable lessons can be drawn from the not-so-distant past, say, the last two hundred years. They can often help us find solutions to complex questions now confronting us, for they show the background of many of the events taking place today, thus providing a key to understanding these events.

Take Haiti, for example. One of the most dramatic pages of modern history must be the popular uprising on that island which took place nearly two hundred years ago. I read about it when I was only a schoolboy. But the history of that uprising took on a new meaning when quite recently I read the lecture given in 1861 in New York and Boston by Wendell Phillips, the great fighter for the freedom of the black slaves in the United States. The lecture was devoted to Toussaint l'Ouverture.

Haiti's national hero, a fine soldier and statesman, Toussaint was born into a slave's family. His father had been brought to Haiti from Africa. When he was nearly fifty years old Toussaint learned to read from an old Negro. He became an avid reader and read everything he could lay his hand on, including works of ancient philosophers, war memoirs and treatises. He also studied the properties of herbs and used them for treating

the sick. The highest-paid job he had in that slave-owning society was that of a coachman.

In those days Haiti (the Spanish called the island San Domingo) was populated by some 30,000 whites, 20,000-30,000 mulattos and about half a million black slaves. That was the time when the slave trade flourished. About 25,000 Africans were forcibly shipped to Haiti annually; approximately the same number of black slaves who worked on the sugar-cane plantations died on the island each year.

From these men, oppressed and humiliated, many of whom could not communicate with one another because they came from different parts of Africa, Toussaint built up an army. And that army defeated, to the surprise of everyone, first the Spanish, then the French, and finally the British.

Toussaint abolished slavery and declared war on the planters. Three abortive attempts were made on his life. When Napoleon sent on Dutch vessels a 30-thousand-strong expeditionary force to put down the rebellion, Toussaint called on his people to repulse the attackers. The best-trained troops in Europe were dealt heavy blows in that life-or-death fight.

Unable to defeat Toussaint on the battle-field, the French perfidiously trapped him and sent him to France. As the ship taking him to France left the shores of the island he turned to the ship's captain and said: "You think you have uprooted the tree of freedom, but I am only one of its branches. The tree I planted has struck such deep roots that the whole of France would not be able to destroy them."

Toussaint was starved to death on Napoleon's order. But the rebellion went on despite the brutality of the French punitive forces. Negroes were bound together and hurled into the sea, exterminated with sulfur fume, and thrown into the midst of snakes and poisonous insects. Brutality breeds brutality. Fifty thousand

Frenchmen died in Haiti while carrying out their emperor's orders...

I also read about Toussaint l'Ouverture in *The History of the 19th Century* by Ernest Lavisse and Alfred Rambaud, two French professors. In the chapter devoted to San Domingo, Toussaint is called a "dictator", the French defeats are attributed to Haiti's climate, and nothing is said of the colonialists' mean tricks and perfidy. A good example of how some historians try to whitewash the deeds of the unjust and besmirch a just cause.

But that is not the main point I wish to make. I recall Toussaint l'Ouverture here chiefly because the rebellion he led is a forerunner of the national liberation wars in which the oppressors learn what it means to try to crush a whole nation.

For many decades France, Britain, Portugal, Spain, Belgium and the United States had tried to keep whole nations and states under the yoke of servitude on the pretext that they were carrying out a "civilizing" mission. But that mission turned out to be one of violence, torture and wholesale executions; in a word, it became a war waged against a whole nation.

And what was the result? The colonialists had to accept defeat again and again. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness" (Proverbs 14:32).

More than 150 years after the Haitian uprising the French fought a war in Vietnam. But they were defeated in that war, despite their superiority in weaponry. French General Navarre had considered the fortified city of Dienbienphu to be impregnable. It was an opinion shared by US General O'Daniel who visited the city. Yet it fell after a 55-day offensive launched by the Vietnamese.

Ten years later the US Army, bogged down in its Vietnam adventure, saw how costly a war could be against a whole nation. The Americans, too, withdrew

from Vietnam, having lost hundres of thousands of lives during the eight years of the war and they were taught the lesson that any attempt to impose one's policies and practices even on small nations is futile.

These wars marked the end of the epoch of colonial empires. They showed that there could never be a return to former times. It is important that each of us should remember these words: "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death" (Proverbs 10:2).

Help Those Who Fight Racism and Discrimination

As one ponders on the history of the national liberation movement, one cannot but recall the enthusiasm and joy with which the convening of the Conference of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945 was greeted by the world public. At that conference the United Nations Charter was adopted, which proclaimed the right of all peoples to self-determination. But it was only after another 15 years of stubborn struggle by national liberation fighters and much loss of life that the Western powers agreed to the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

The declaration was not consistently implemented. Angola and Mozambique won independence 30 years after the adoption of the UN Charter, and Zimbabwe became independent only in 1980. In New Caledonia the struggle for national sovereignty, against racial segregation and foreign dominance continues to this day.

Colonial oppression has always been based on racial discrimination and on depriving the majority by a

minority of the basic human rights. Forgetting the Biblical command: "...have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50), the ruling minority has been waging an endless war against the oppressed majority in an attempt to keep the latter in servitude.

Let us consider the system of apartheid in South Africa. It was established by a white minority in 1948, the year, ironically enough, when the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. The system, according to its sponsors, provides for the separate development of each of the racial groups living in South Africa and Namibia. But actually this system has been designed to perpetuate white minority rule over the Africans, who are deprived of their land and natural resources, and to force them to do back-breaking work for a pittance. Under the system the blacks have been driven out of the lands of their forebears. The United States has so far refused to apply economic sanctions against South Africa, as was recommended by the United Nations in 1963. The position of the United States on this question appears all the more cynical in the light of the trade embargo it imposed against independent Nicaragua in May 1985. Thus, the actions of some great powers are dictated not so much by humane principles as by patently selfish ends.

Biblical history and world history show that the absence of human rights always led to popular uprisings, sharp clashes between people and nations, and conflicts, both big and small, that dragged on for years. And that is what we see today in those parts of the world where justice, equality and freedom are absent. The soul of man will not tolerate the absence of rights, just as the human body will not tolerate pain.

Guided by humane principles, the Churches today unite their forces in the fight against oppression and despotism, against racism, colonial slavery and exploitation. Thus, the World Council of Churches has repeat-

Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia, His Holiness Pope and Patriarch Nicholas VI of Alexandria and All Africa, Dr. Billy Graham, a well-known American evangelist, Mufti Ziyatdin Babakhan, Chairman of the Muslim Religious Board for Central Asia and Kazakhstan, are seen in the presidium during the opening of the World Conference of Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe, Moscow, May 1982

edly stated its position on the policy of racial segrega tion conducted by the government of South Africa. A resolution on the situation in South Africa adopted b the Central Committee of the World Council of Chur ches notes that there will be no peace and justice i South Africa until the more than 300 racial segregatio laws are repealed and a democratic state that unites th representatives of all races is created.

South Africa is armed to the teeth and is a potentia nuclear power. It is violating the borders of all it neighbours, in particular, Botswana, Angola, Mozam bique and Zimbabwe. If the West should stop backing this white minority regime, the whole structure of domination and exploitation in South Africa would collapse. Determined to uphold justice, the participants in the Sixth All-Christian Peace Assembly declared their full support for the people of South Africa, especially its black majority, in their struggle for independence, human dignity and democracy.

The apartheid regime should be condemned also because it ignores the calls for justice and the observance of human rights and because it arrogantly disregards the calls by people all over the world and by the United Nations in this connection. We may mention here the still

unresolved question of independence for Namibia, which has been of great concern for the Churches over many decades.

The statement of the World Council of Churches on Namibia points out that Namibia, one of the first territories to be occupied by white rulers, remains a tragic symbol of genocide, privations and the absence of human rights.

The Namibian people, the statement says, are deprived of the right to govern their own country. A puppet regime, illegal and totally unacceptable to the people, has been set up there by South Africa. The South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the true and legitimate spokesman of the Namibian people, is being persecuted and attacked.

The Namibians have resisted the occupation with great courage from the very start, and are continuing their struggle for independence. The Churches in Namibia, whose following accounts for over 80 per cent of the population, are in the forefront of the struggle for freedom and human dignity and resolutely oppose the racist regime in South Africa. The illegal South African occupation regime has resorted to acts of intimidation, attacking churches in Namibia, destroying their property and arresting members of their clergy.

The World Council of Churches has supported the United Nations in recognizing SWAPO as the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people, and has given humanitarian aid to SWAPO and to all those in need of help through the Churches. It has made consistent efforts to help bring about the withdrawal of the 800,000-strong occupation army from Namibia whose rich natural resources are under the control of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The world public is on the side of the blacks in South Africa and Namibia. But the latter are not alone in need of support. There are many people who are struggling

for justice and peace in their own countries and who have so far been denied real freedom.

The Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Vancouver in 1983, was addressed by representatives from countries where people lived under the system of apartheid and racial hatred and where genocide was being carried out. Clergymen from the Middle East told about the ordeals of the Palestinians and the Lebanese; those from Africa, about the tragedies of people living in slums; and those from Latin America, about the terror unleashed by the reactionary forces there.

The last two years have seen many changes in the world. But some nations continue to live under oppressive regimes and remain victims of genocidal wars. In Africa and Asia millions die in wars and of hunger and privations. Meanwhile, the monopolies make huge profits by selling arms and luxury goods.

In the face of all this we must speak out and insist that justice be established in the world, that war be abolished and the ways towards truth be found everywhere. We must not remain passive when exploitation and oppression, poverty and hunger are driving millions to despair.

Only love, compassion and genuine concern for people can lead to peace and give meaning to life. Hatred, aggression and avarice lead to war, to death and destruction.

Let No One Suffer from Hunger

Many nations in Africa suffer not only from hardships arising from the political situation in various parts of the continent, from the assault on their rights by the forces of evil.

Long a victim of colonialism and imperialism, Africa also suffers from hunger. As a result of a severe drought that hit twenty African countries, with Sudan and Ethiopia being the worst affected, millions of people died for lack of food.

The President of the World Council of Churches, Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios of Delhi and the North (of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India), visited Ethiopia in April 1985 to assess the needs of people in the areas hit by famine. This is what he saw there.

"We visited the camp at Makale, where the destitute are cared for in tents—62,000 people, two families to one tent, after some 80,000 have been sent to various settlements; scores of thousands are waiting to be accommodated in the camps. Of these some 20-25 thousand are being given food rations from the camp, but sleep in the open without a shelter.

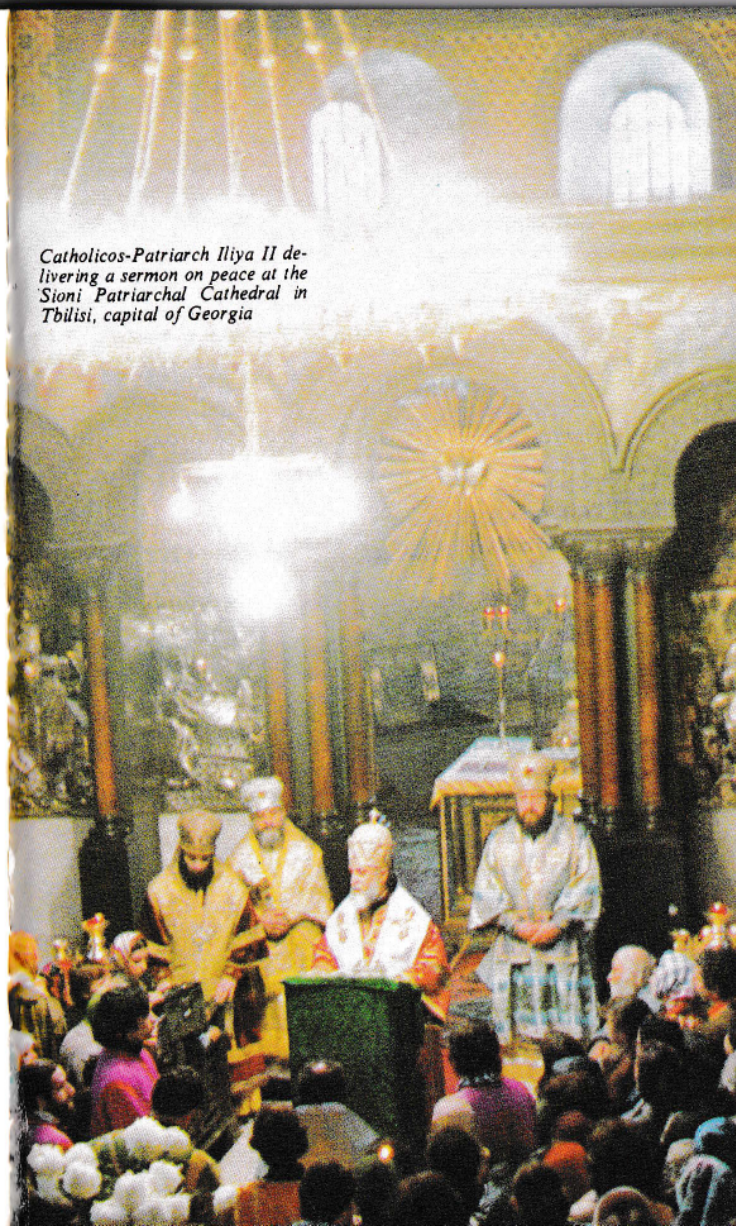
"The Ethiopian Orthodox bishop was with us. As I saw a large Ethiopian church in the distance, I commented to the bishop: 'That is a nice church; is it recently built? It is quite large.' He replied: 'The church is large, but can accommodate only a few thousand. More people are coming to the church from these camps. We cannot accommodate them. And our cemetery is not big enough.'

"I saw tears gather in the young bishop's eyes as he said: 'One week we had to bury 8,000 people. We buried them ten to a grave. It was rough.'

"Friends, this is another war taking millions dying of hunger, malnutrition and disease."

Like other natural calamities drought cannot be forecast. But what had caused the drought to turn into such a terrible disaster for tens of millions of people? And why had it been practically impossible to avert the disaster?

In the opinion of experts, the drought and famine must be seen against the background of prolonged and



Catholicos-Patriarch Iliya II delivering a sermon on peace at the Sioni Patriarchal Cathedral in Tbilisi, capital of Georgia

A wedding at the Mtskheta Cathedral

Metropolitan David holding a baby who had just been baptized

The Akhali-Shuamta monastery built in the 16th century, now preserved as an architectural monument of Georgia

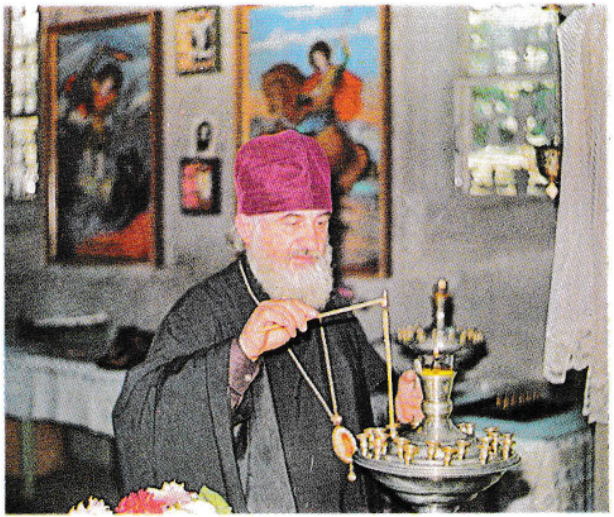
Metropolitan David never misses the annual family get-together

Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia, members of the Russian Orthodox Church's Holy Synod and of the Working Presidium and other delegates and guests of the World Conference of Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by the Kremlin wall. Moscow, May 9, 1982

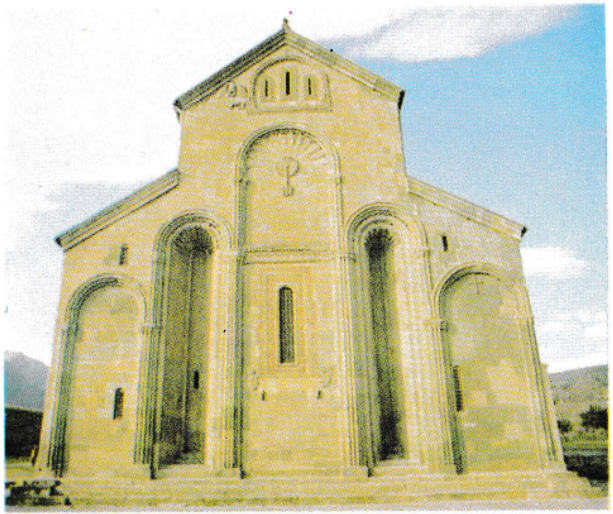
Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia addressing the World Conference of Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe, May 1982

In the conference hall

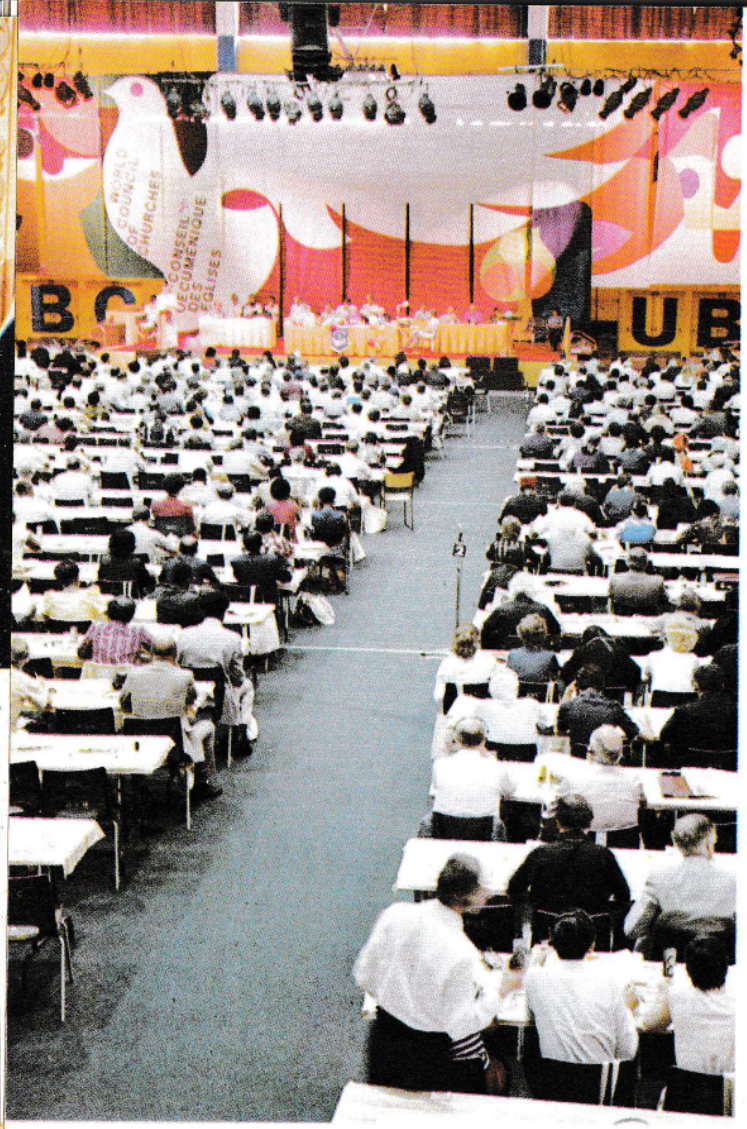
Dr. Billy Graham, a well-known American evangelist, delivering a sermon at the Patriarchal Cathedral of Epiphany in Moscow



Metropolitan David begins his day



The 11th-century Sveti-Tskhoveli Cathedral stands in the heart of Tbilisi



The Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in session. Vancouver, Canada, 1983

Orthodox Church dignitaries (in the foreground) were among the 800 delegates to the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches representing 301 churches from 100 countries

Members of the diocese of Sukhumi and Abkhazia laying a wreath at the foot of the Monument to the Unknown Soldier in Sukhumi on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the victory over fascism

The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches the Reverend Emilio Castro (second from right) on a visit to Georgia. The Georgian Orthodox Church takes an active part in the ecumenical movement and in the work of the World Council of Churches

The Holy Trinity Church in Batumi

Metropolitan David with Coretta King

In Cleburne, Texas, invited to take a ride on a horse, Metropolitan David, a highlander, says: "It's a beautiful horse, but a good horse won't let anyone ride him but his master."

Metropolitan David gives American children in Atlanta, Georgia, a peace message from children in Soviet Georgia

reckless exploitation of the resources of Africa by transnational corporations, of large-scale deforestation and soil erosion and of careless use of grazing grounds. The continent is on the brink of ruin. Export revenues have been dropping because of unfavourable terms of trade. African countries have to resort increasingly to external loans. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development says that 85 per cent of the loans it extends to developing countries annually goes towards paying the interests on previous loans.

The economies of many African countries are dominated by transnational corporations. For each dollar they invest in Africa they get 3.5 dollars in return. A former exporter of foodstuffs, the continent now imports them. When one takes into account the almost insuperable difficulties facing African countries in the sphere of development, their poverty and technological lag, one can understand how any natural calamity can prove catastrophic for millions of Africans.

Not only economists but also clergymen have often discussed the plight of the poorest countries of Africa. Many projects have been put forward, including special long-term development programmes for Africa, with priority given to food production, to be implemented by international bodies. This will take many billions of dollars. Where is the money to come from?

The answer is: by reducing military spending. And this can come about with an easing of international tension and a halt to the arms race.

There are many honest, courageous and hard-working men and women in the world who would readily use their knowledge and skill to help eradicate poverty and diseases in Africa and other continents. Their hearts are filled with compassion for their fellowmen.

Humanity cannot exist without peace and justice. When they prevail on all continents, "there shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains" (Psalms 72:16).

Uphold Every Nation's Right to Life

No harvest can we reap
In the fiery war-tormented land

These simple and wise verses by Mouín Bessieso, a Palestinian poet, come to my mind each time I hear the latest Middle East news on the radio. Wars and inequities in the region have deprived people of the joys of life, their daily bread and hope.

Blood is shed in many places in the Middle East. Iran and Iraq have been involved in a war of attrition that takes the lives of innocent people and benefits only the manufacturers and suppliers of arms and those who want to see the Middle East a backward, war-torn region. All attempts to settle the dispute have so far failed. Lebanon, once the pearl of the Middle East, has become an arena of fratricidal wars and foreign interference. Those guided by avarice, fanaticism or shortsightedness have pushed the country onto the very brink of irreversible partition.

Israel, repeatedly ignoring UN resolutions, refuses to withdraw its troops from the occupied Arab territories and continues to pursue a policy of violence and oppression with regard to the Arabs and of building Jewish settlements in the occupied areas. "He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him" (Proverbs 11:27). By plunging Arab nations into grief and ruin Israel learns the cost of war and its effects on the country. The loss of lives, economic upheavals and increase in crime and terrorism have become part of Israeli life.

But the hardest lot has befallen the Palestinian people, victims of wars of aggression and gross inequities. They are now an exile nation driven from the land of their forebears and deprived of the right to live and work in peace.

The International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists, Amsterdam, 1983

It is heart-breaking to think that there are children who were born and who are growing up in a land which is not their own. Many of them live in crowded camps, in tents or hovels, on meagre rations and in constant terror of their life. There are many things that divide people on earth. But there are also many things that unite them, regardless of their colour or their religion, namely, a faith in human dignity, scorn for the oppressor, and a striving for justice and compassion. Faith in spiritual values and in justice, and compassion are part of the teachings of all the great religions.

Today no clergyman or layman can be resigned to the fact that unjust acts are being perpetrated on earth, that the oppressor is still cracking his whip at the oppressed, that somewhere in the world despotic actions are being taken not against one man or one family, but against a whole nation which has been robbed of hearth and home.

In my country people of all nationalities, believers

and non-believers alike, feel a deep compassion for the Arab people of Palestine. Our sympathies with their aspirations stem from our own history. In olden times the many nations inhabiting the territory of what is now the Soviet Union waged a long and bitter struggle against foreign oppressors. I have already mentioned how my native Georgia had to repulse foreign invaders again and again in order to uphold its independence. By uniting with Russia, a nation of the same Orthodox faith, Georgia secured forever its sovereign right to live in peace and tranquility. The Armenian people drove back foreign invaders many a time. The Russian people carried out a struggle for centuries in defence of freedom. United in a multinational family, the peoples of the Soviet Union beat back the fascist invaders and routed fascism in a war that took millions of lives—Russians, Byelorussians, Jews and people of all other nationalities of the Soviet Union. Memories of our own past do not permit us to remain indifferent in the face of others' suffering, and our hearts will know no peace until peace and justice triumph throughout the world.

Restrain the Enemies of the Human Race

I'm often asked, by newsmen mostly, what makes me take such an active interest in social issues and devote so much time and effort to the peace movement. In reply I seldom refer to any philosophical or moral and ethical principles although naturally I have them, like any other clergyman. I prefer to recite the following verses by Nikoloz Baratashvili, the great Georgian poet and democrat:

Since we are all men, the sons of this world,
We must always take care of it following our fathers' call.
For wretched is he who while alive resembles the dead,
Who living in this world is unconcerned about it.

I was pleased that a consensus was reached by the delegates to the Sixth All-Christian Peace Assembly on vital international issues. Practically all aspects of international relations were carefully considered and deep concern was expressed over the developments in the world's trouble spots. All this was reflected in the Assembly documents.

In their statement on the Middle East the delegates reaffirmed the need to guarantee the security and integrity of all the states in the region and called for the setting up of an independent Palestinian state and also for the convening of an international conference on the Middle East with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Israel, the United States, the Soviet Union and other permanent members of the UN Security Council. With regard to Afghanistan the delegates noted that the continuing supply of arms, the training and financial support of terrorists from outside the country remained a chief obstacle to the withdrawal of the limited contingent of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Discussing the situation in Central America, the delegates pointed out that the United States was acting in an irresponsible way by interfering in the internal affairs of El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and other countries in the region which brought about an extremely tense situation in the region. Much attention was given to Africa, Europe, Southeast Asia, to foreign military bases in developing countries and to armed conflicts between states.

Thus, despotism, injustice, terrorism and oppression, those ugly manifestations of egoism and brutality, which run counter to the Christian conceptions of kindness and brotherhood of nations, were sharply condemned. It was pointed out that one must not condone the actions of those responsible for the death and sufferings of their fellowmen. Like rats, they are ready to sink their teeth into human flesh in pursuit of

their selfish interests. I would call them the enemies of the human race.

It is not always easy to fight them. Putting on the mantle of piety and Christian love they hold forth on democracy, peace and progress, and on the defence of human rights while at the same time provoking conflicts and strife in various parts of the world in order to get larger returns on their investments in arms production. They declare they are opposed to violence and yet consider violence to be the only effective means of protecting their interests. They do all they can to undermine measures aimed at promoting trust between nations, and trample underfoot the right of nations to independence by supporting their vassals, mere puppets that are a curse to their own people. And all this is done for the sake of money and luxury, of imaginary grandeur. Those who betray their own people and other nations are also enemies of the human race, the apostates in the family of man.

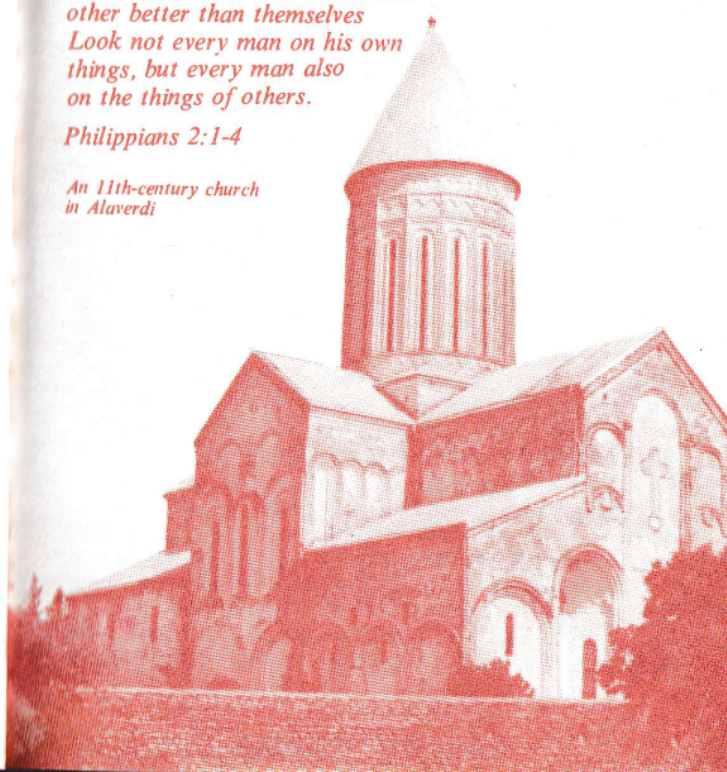
There are no evil nations, only evil rulers. There are no bellicose nations, only cliques of bellicose individuals who are driven by ambition and manage to hold the reins of power. There are no backward nations, only countries that lag behind others in their development owing to foreign domination and ruthless exploitation. And lastly, there is no confrontation between groups of countries, there are only evil-doers who create a climate of enmity in which the threat of a global war becomes increasingly real.

We are one family. If some of us are estranged from others, it is a temporary thing and can be overcome. There is a path leading to unity which would enable us to solve most complicated problems arising in any sphere of our life. But before we can embark on this path we must make the first steps towards a genuine and lasting peace.

Exhortations to Fellowship

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,
Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves
Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Philippians 2:1-4



An 11th-century church in Alaverdi

Turn to One Another with an Open Heart

I have chosen an excerpt from the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians as the epigraph to this chapter because it is a sincere expression of the Christian striving for universal love and fellowship, for modesty and compassion, mutual assistance and trust. If we want to bring about a situation conforming to the Christian ideals we must turn to one another with an open heart.

Experience has shown how fruitful contacts between people of different countries can be. In the course of contacts people learn about one another and come to trust one another. If you do not trust someone you would not want to go with him further on your way. For the nations of the world a long road lies ahead and on this road there are many difficulties and obstacles. They can be overcome only if all people on earth cooperate with one another.

When I say contacts I have in mind not only meetings between certain groups of people—statesmen, scientists, clergymen—but contacts between the most diverse groups of the population of different countries. Of course, it is impossible, for example, for the Soviet Union and the United States to have tourist exchanges involving, say, 50 million people each year. But by creating the right moral atmosphere on the international scene they can broaden contacts and increase the flow of tourists both ways considerably. What is most important, such contacts can influence the very character of international relations. Human contacts are above all a

way of receving information about another country first-hand instead of through ill-wishers and sensation-mongers. During my visits to the United States I was convinced again and again that people there have a great desire to obtain truthful information about life in the Soviet Union.

In May 1984, a 14-member inter-religious delegation from the Soviet Union, including myself, visited the United States at the invitation of the National Council of the Churches of Christ. We were showered with questions about various aspects of life in the Soviet Union, most of which demanded fairly detailed answers. We welcomed the questions. We were glad to have an opportunity to address American audiences and tell the truth about life in our country.

Our group visited three states and five cities. We met governors and mayors, students and schoolchildren, clergymen and journalists. After our get-togethers almost all of them said the same thing: "We want to see all that you have told us with our own eyes."

"Do come and see for yourself," we replied. And we were glad to learn that a large group—270 people—expressed a wish to come to the Soviet Union and visit various Union Republics and cities.

The American tourists travelled in the Soviet Union in groups of 25 to 30 people. At the end of the tour they gathered in Moscow where a press conference was arranged at the press centre of the *Kosmos* Hotel. Many of the Americans addressed the conference, and running through all their remarks and comments was the theme that they had come with certain preconceptions about the Soviet Union but were leaving with very different views on the subject. This is what communion with an open heart means. Anyone can discover for himself a new, interesting and previously unknown world provided, of course, he wishes to see it.

But to get back to the group of American tourists.

Most of them are honest and sincere and told the truth about what they had seen when they returned home. This caused an uproar in the United States. "The Russians have fed them too much caviar!" "They have been bribed with expensive gifts!" This is what anti-Soviet journalists wrote about their compatriots who would not act against their conscience. Some papers declared that the Americans had simply been deceived. But how can you deceive 270 people on such a scale?

There is another striking case in point. One may recall the abuse heaped upon Billy Graham, leader of the Evangelical Association, after he had completed a tour of our country and had said good words about it. What was so outrageous about his remarks that elicited such an angry reaction? He said that today there was a need

The Holy Trinity Church under construction in the city of Batumi

for broader American-Soviet contacts, including those in the religious sphere, so that the Americans could see for themselves under what conditions believers in the Soviet Union lived.

I am sure you will agree with me that these remarks by a kind and clever man, by a prominent religious figure and a talented preacher should have evoked a positive response in the United States. After all, Billy Graham was calling for better relations between his country and the Soviet Union, for a healthier international climate. Instead, Billy Graham got a tongue-lashing...

But I do not think that Billy Graham regrets his good deeds and actions. I am certain that, like all clergymen who want peace for their people, he believes that no abuse or criticism can prevent us from establishing contacts with one another.

Try and Find Out the Real State of Affairs

During my visits to the United States, I was often asked the following questions: "Do they try to prevent you from conducting services and meeting believers in your country?", "Is it hard to be a metropolitan in the Soviet Union?", "Can one go to church any time one wants to?"

These questions show what a distorted picture the Americans have of our country. They think it is all but a forced labour camp. Where do they get such false information? Who is trying to create a false notion of the clergymen's position in the USSR, and why?

I answered all the questions put to me by the Americans. I told them about my diocese, about the Sukhumi cathedral. I told them about religious services, christenings, weddings, burial services—in short, about the day-to-day life of the clergy and believers, and the Americans never ceased wondering at my words as they

compared them with what they had heard before.

"Is all this true? You mean believers in your country are not persecuted at all?" they asked in amazement. Sometimes I could not help smiling. Often I told them about myself by way of illustration. Judge for yourselves, I said. I graduated from a medical college, but later decided to become a clergyman and took holy orders. And never have I heard a word of reproach directed against me, or felt ostracized or humiliated.

"But what about the family?" they asked me. "How do Communists get along with the religious members of the family?" I had a hard time keeping a straight face again. Well, I said, my brother is a member of the Soviet Communist Party. We see much of each other and our relationships are free of any enmity and conflicts. The situation is the same throughout the country. After all, freedom of conscience is guaranteed by the Constitution of the USSR as well as other rights and freedoms.

"Could it be that the Christian religion enjoys special privileges in the Soviet Union?" I was often asked. "Is it possible for all the religions in the country to enjoy equal rights?" "Yes," I said, "it is possible. And this is how matters stand in the Soviet Union. Whether one professes Christianity, Islam, Judaism or Buddhism, he enjoys the same rights and freedoms."

We heard the same questions as we went from one American city to another. Wherever we went, most people, the younger ones especially, admitted that what we said was quite the opposite of what they had imagined.

To add substance to what I said, I often referred not only to individual facts, but also to Soviet legislation. I said that under the Soviet legal system the rights of the believers are protected. I quoted the article of the Soviet Constitution which guarantees Soviet citizens the right to profess any religion and to conduct religious worship.

I pointed out that under Soviet law those guilty of

interfering with the performance of religious rites are liable to punishment, including imprisonment. It is only forbidden to organize such religious groups which engage in practices harmful to their members' health or which incite citizens to evade their civic duties.

I can say that the clergy in our country honestly observe the laws. There are exceptions, of course—individual religious extremists, fanatics having nothing to do with theology, or simply profit-seekers who try to circumvent these laws. Such persons are held responsible for their actions.

There is a special government agency, the Council for Religious Affairs, whose important function is to see that the laws pertaining to the activities of religious associations are strictly observed, without interfering in any way in their internal affairs.

What I have said shows, I think, that all the talk about the persecution of believers in the Soviet Union, about the infringement of freedom of conscience and the violent uprooting of religion in the Soviet Union is without foundation. Such talk would make it seem that clergymen in the Soviet Union not only put up with religious persecution but even try to whitewash the persecutors. I believe I am expressing an opinion shared by representatives of all religions in the Soviet Union when I say that such "concern" shown by foreign "well-wishers" for our believers is insulting to the clergy in our country.

Take the Georgian Orthodox Church, for instance. Do my parishioners need such "concern"? Do they complain of oppression or restrictions? Talk to any believer in my vast diocese—a Georgian, a Russian, an Abkhazian, a Mingrelian, a Greek or a Ukrainian, and he will tell you that he enjoys all the rights of a Soviet citizen. Any journalist or clergyman who wishes it can have such a talk any time.

As for the rights of the Georgian Orthodox Church as

a whole, it is separated from the state, like all other religious associations in the Soviet Union, which guarantees it canonical independence. To quote the Constitution of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic, "Citizens of the Georgian SSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess or not to profess any religion and to conduct religious worship or atheistic propaganda. Incitement of hostility or hatred on religious grounds is prohibited."

Exercising the rights granted it by the Constitution, the Georgian Orthodox Church is guided in its activity by both ecclesiastical and state laws. It has its own ecclesiastical legislation which defines in detail the rights and duties of the clergy and laymen and reflects the many-sided internal and external activities of the Church.

At present the Georgian Church comprises 15 dioceses headed by metropolitans, archbishops and bishops. The Georgian Orthodox Church is headed by Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Iliya II.

The Georgian Patriarchate consists of the following departments: internal affairs, external affairs, editing and publishing, finance and architecture. The departments are headed by bishops. The clergy of the Georgian Church are trained at the Mtskheta Theological Seminary of St. Andrew the First-Called.

The Georgian Patriarchate gives much attention to the restoration and decoration of churches and monasteries. The Sioni Patriarchal Cathedral in Tbilisi is now being restored. The gate of the Sveti-Tskhoveli Cathedral is regaining its original 11th-century look. A new church has been built in Batumi. Incidentally, it has been built under my supervision.

The prestige of the Georgian Orthodox Church is growing with each year both inside the country and internationally. It is a full, equal and active member of the World Council of Churches, the Christian Peace

Conference and the Conference of European Churches. It regards the right to peacemaking as its sacred right.

This was what I said when asked whether believers and the clergy are persecuted in the Soviet Union.

Be Objective in Assessing and Reporting Events

Previously I had not thought it possible that a journalist or a radio reporter who calls himself a Christian would say or write untruth. Nevertheless, this happens rather often, and I shall give a few examples of it below. Truthful information is essential to developing contacts and to improving relations between people and nations.

I spoke about that in the United States, especially when I addressed journalists. I reminded them that a correspondent ought to check and double-check the source materials he uses when writing about our country. The attitude of people in the United States, their wish to establish contacts with Soviet people and to improve relations between our two countries largely depend on the way journalists depict life in the Soviet Union. "Be truthful in your reporting," I said. "This is important both for easing tension and for your own people. This is necessary for a correct assessment of events by the leaders of our two countries and, in the final count, for achieving understanding, mutual trust and mutual respect."

The key to a correct assessment of events and to their truthful reporting lies in objectivity. Without it neither a journalist, a politician, nor a scientist can draw the right conclusions from what he sees and learns. One should get rid of bias when one deals with any fact. Instead of trying to misinterpret it, one should consider carefully

the degree of its importance to the destiny of a nation, to the destiny of mankind. When speaking with Americans, I called upon them to show objectivity in assessing the actions of the Soviet Union in the international arena.

Americans often asked me what clergymen in the Soviet Union are doing to persuade their government to improve the international situation. My answer was as follows. Let us be objective and see whether this is necessary. Our government has always been working for peace and addressed numerous proposals to the governments of other countries aimed at improving the international climate. What objections can I as a Christian have against peace initiatives? Is a government that wants to see stable, friendly relations established among all nations in need of any influence on the part of the Church? I then asked my interlocutors whether they had tried to be objective and find out what prevents an improvement of US-Soviet relations today. And more: is there any American, irrespective of social status, sex and age, who honestly believes that our country is responsible for the fact that detente is on the wane and that the American side has done all it can to preserve it? No one answered this question in the affirmative.

Let us be fair: from what I have heard and learned in the United States I have gathered that most people there are seriously concerned about current international developments. But to be a real peace champion one must assess objectively any move towards detente made by the other side, and also one's own move—whether it is a positive or a negative one, and what its political and psychological consequences would be both immediately and in the long run. Can objectivity in judgement be understood in any other way?

The Bible says: "The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness" (Ecclesiastes 2:14). The road of reason is the road of objective assessment of

events and their truthful reporting. "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself" (Ecclesiastes 10:12).

Repulse the Slanderers

"Cheap propaganda, hate and racism, prejudice and quite often sheer human stupidity do not help people understand one another better, develop respect for one another, preserve and strengthen world peace. I am now looking back and recalling my own experience. Even a few years ago, when I first decided to get acquainted with Soviet people, I did not know I would come to love them."

This is a quotation from the book *How I "Discovered" Religion in Russia* by the Italian journalist Aldo Quinto Lazzari. I have heard similar words said by dozens of people who had come to the Soviet Union deeply prejudiced against our country, against the Soviet way of life, against everything Soviet in general, and who had left the Soviet Union in an entirely different frame of mind, having made numerous friends whom they didn't want to part with. Such is the nature of communion: it leads to mutual understanding, dispells wrong preconceptions and removes all prejudices till almost none of them is left. When there are contacts between people and nations lies and slander do not flourish.

Some may object to this by saying that lies and slander do not amount to much after all. For surely truth is stronger. It is indeed, and as a Christian I am convinced that truth always triumphs in the end. Nevertheless, slander spread by the media can sow hatred and hostility in many souls. This is especially pernicious today when every effort should be made to sow the

seeds of goodness, of fraternal feelings and a desire to understand one another and to cooperate for the sake of peace and for the good of man. I believe, therefore, that the slanderers must be repulsed in every way possible.

A few years ago the French religious paper *La Croix* told its readers that eighteen "underground monks" had been shot dead from a helicopter 60 kilometres from the city of Sukhumi, and added that this information had come from "most reliable sources"!

I responded to this report in a statement which was broadcast by the Radio Moscow French-language service. I reminded the publishers and editors of *La Croix* that slander was a sin and stressed that as a Christian I could not keep silent in the face of sin.

It may be assumed, I said, that the *La Croix* editors know nothing about the Sukhumi area. It may be assumed that they imagine it to be a desert or a tract of the impassable jungle, that they do not know it is one of the most popular Soviet health resorts visited by millions of holiday-makers and tourists each year and inhabited by hundreds of thousands of people. Such ignorance could be dismissed as harmless and as evidence of the fact that the anonymous author of the report had never been in those parts. But the spreading of slanderous rumours is, in my view, a dishonest and unworthy practice.

News reports such as that carried by *La Croix* can only be described as fabrications filled with hatred for our country and our people. On behalf of the Church I represent and on my own behalf as a clergyman, I testify that nothing of the sort has happened in my diocese.

The fabrication about "underground monks" is simply absurd. There are no such monks in my diocese. And why should there be any? As I have already said, the Constitution of my Republic guarantees all its citizens freedom of conscience and they can, if they so wish, profess any religion and conduct religious wor-

ship. In the 15 dioceses of the Georgian Orthodox Church, a visitor to Georgia will find Russian and Greek Orthodox communities as well as Georgian ones. And in the Sukhumi Cathedral he can attend services conducted in the Georgian, Russian, Abkhazian and Greek languages. What he will not hear in my diocese is confirmation of the lie with which *La Croix* has tainted itself.

Unmask the Enemies of Peaceful Coexistence

Unfortunately, the slanderous attack I have just mentioned is by no means the only one. The "well-wishers" abroad often cast aspersions on the Russian Orthodox Church, Muslim clergymen and rabbis in the Soviet Union.

The Keston College in London, for instance, is notorious for the biased information it provides concerning the position of the Church and believers in our country. And I have noticed that this information follows a certain pattern. Usually it is based on a criminal offence involving a believer or a clergyman who has broken Soviet laws, but he is presented as someone who is being punished for "religious activity". The conclusion is then drawn that all Christians, in fact, all believers are persecuted in the Soviet Union. You will agree with me, I am sure, that such practice is nothing but an attempt to sow prejudice and enmity towards our country and towards the Church in the Soviet Union.

Fred Mayer's photo album *The Orthodox Church in Russia*, published in Switzerland, contains photographs of hundreds of churches in various parts of the Soviet Union and shows the life in the monasteries and

dioceses. Most of the European religious papers, including *Service Orthodox de Press, Tablet, Friend, Evangelische Press Dienst*, welcomed the photo album, calling it "a magnificent publication" which illustrates the versatile activity of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union. The Keston College, however, strongly criticized the photo album and accused its author of providing "misinformation".

The Keston College demands that the West should interfere in the relations between the religious organizations and the authorities in the Soviet Union. This looks like outright instigation of hostile attacks on the State by the Church, an attempt to sow discord between the Church and the government.

It should be noted that such actions are being increasingly opposed by many Christian leaders in the West, who have an objective, unbiased view of our country. In his book *Christianity and Marxism* Fielding Clarke, the well-known figure in the British ecumenical movement, writes:

"Both the Russian Orthodox Church and the vast majority of Baptists operating above-ground live and function normally in the Soviet Union today. Their churches are packed even on weekdays in towns; money, which is drawn entirely from voluntary contributions and involves no unearned increment from invested capital (as in the West), is no problem at all...

"I find it regrettable and harmful," says Clarke, "that most people in Britain accept without question the stereotype picture of the Soviet Union and its Churches presented by the mass media and organizations like the Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism, and Underground Evangelism."

Fielding Clarke notes the large-scale peacemaking work being done by the Church and believers in the Soviet Union. In Britain and in other Western states, he says, quite a few barriers are put in the way of the peace

movement. Clarke cites as an example the convocation of a forum in York, England, which was planned as a representative international conference against the arms race. The British authorities, however, refused entry visas to most of the foreign delegates, which did great damage to this event. Nothing of the kind can happen in the Soviet Union. The World Forum of Peace Forces in Moscow was attended by 3,200 people from 140 countries, and the World Conference "Religious Workers for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations Among Nations", held in July 1977, by 660 representatives of the world's various religions. Clarke stresses that in the Soviet Union the Church can work for a peaceful and just life on earth to the fullest extent and without hindrance.

Generally speaking, slanderous attacks on the Russian Orthodox Church have been intensified over the past few years precisely in connection with its peacemaking activity. It seems that such activity is not to the liking of certain quarters in the West, which would rather not see churchgoers in the Soviet Union work for the triumph of the forces of peace over the forces of war.

Strengthen the Ecumenical Movement

After a sermon I had given in a cathedral in the Federal Republic of Germany, a parishioner came up to me and said:

"What you've said shows that you not only deal with matters of a purely religious character but also take an interest in problems of international relations. Many senior members of the clergy of a number of the Churches of the world are known to share this interest. Why is this so?"

Indeed, international problems including the problem of safeguarding peace, are now dealt with by many Churches. First of all, according to Christian theology peacemaking is an important part of the Christian teaching. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ said: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

The Apostles call upon us to seek peace, friendship among nations and universal Christian love. St. John the Divine said: "God is love" (1 John 4:16). Without love there is no peace. That is why love and peace are indivisible notions for Christians. As we call on the believers to love one another, we call on them to cherish peace—to be at peace with themselves and with others.

I have often said in my sermons that one of the processes involving almost all the Churches of the world is their drawing ever closer together on the basis of peacemaking as the essence of the ecumenical movement. As for the Russian Orthodox Church, the Georgian Orthodox Church and the other Churches in the Soviet Union, participation in peacemaking is an expression of their sincere desire to prevent the destruction of mankind and to ensure a secure existence for believers who confide their thoughts and aspirations to them.

Indeed, the Church is separated from the State in our country. But we the clergy remain citizens of our country. As such we cannot but think about the future of our people.

During the Second World War the clergy in the Soviet Union did all in their power to support the nationwide struggle against fascism, to bring about the triumph of a just cause. I am speaking of justice not only as a clergyman true to my moral and ethical principles, but also as a citizen of my country, as a human being. Today thousands of clergymen representing various religions think and act like myself. Their moral principles and their civic duty to their own people and to all people in the world are the strongest motives

for their participation in joint peacemaking, in the ecumenical movement.

We are becoming ever more firmly convinced that contacts among believers and among the Churches play an enormous role in working out a common stand with regard to the vital problems of today. A good illustration of the development of international relations between Churches is the activity of the World Council of Churches whose members represent almost a billion believers of various religions. I have already mentioned the Sixth All-Christian Peace Assembly and the Buenos Aires sessions of the World Council of Churches' Central Committee in 1985, at which vital international problems were discussed. But it is the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver that proved a turning point in its activities.

It was attended by 800 delegates representing 301 churches of 100 countries. I am proud of the fact that I took part in that most representative forum. I say this not only because participation in the deliberations of the General Assembly, which laid the foundations of new relationships among Churches and provided an opportunity for an exchange of experience in the sphere of spiritual life, was instructive and interesting, but also because it gave me—and, I hope, many other clergymen—a powerful impetus to continued and more intense peacemaking work on the basis of a single position which is the only correct position today. The Assembly declared that it wanted peace—not peace that is based on mutual fear of ever more destructive weapons being used, but peace based on social justice and respect for human dignity, i.e. peace conforming to our notions of the peace of God.

I have referred to the Christian Assembly in Vancouver as a turning point because it adopted important statements on peace and justice, on human rights, and

on the situation in the Middle East, Southern Africa and Central America.

I shall mention here only the discussion on the Afghan problem at the Assembly, which is especially memorable to me. Many churchmen from capitalist countries spoke on this problem. Representatives from the Russian Orthodox Church and myself also took the floor. The discussion was not a mere setting forth of certain known views, but a concrete exchange of views on the future of the Afghan people as the clergy saw it, and on what should be done to further the interests of the people of Afghanistan. A representative from Pakistan said that the contingent of Soviet troops, which, as is known, is in Afghanistan at its government's request, should leave the country without delay, and called on the gathering to endorse this point of view. But there was a different point of view as well. Its adherents pointed out that the withdrawal of Soviet troops would not be conducive to the establishment of peace and stability in that country, that it would encourage extremist elements, complicate the military-political situation in the region because it would lead to an aggravation of relations among several countries, thus putting the fate of all mankind in jeopardy. The speakers acknowledged the lawfulness of the actions of the Afghan government which was compelled to seek military assistance from its northern neighbour in order to protect the country from outside interference and from terror unleashed by domestic counterrevolutionaries.

The matter was put to a vote. The results came as a shock to those who would like to use the Afghan issue as a pretext for fanning anti-Sovietism. An absolute majority of the Assembly delegates approved the proposed draft resolution, and only eighty delegates voted against it.

The delegates showed still greater unanimity on the problem of the nuclear arms race. The Assembly partici-

pants resolved that the Churches should declare in no uncertain terms that the production, development as well as the use of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity and must be condemned from the point of view of theology and morality.

Inspired by the Evangelical call "to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79), the Sixth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches and, following it, the Sixth All-Christian Peace Assembly in Prague as well as the sessions of the World Council of Churches in Buenos Aires adopted decisions to work untiringly for an end to the stockpiling and perfection of nuclear and other mass destruction weapons, to support peace initiatives aimed at safeguarding and strengthening peace, and to make every effort so that all people on earth enjoy a worthy way of life. Christ said: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

It follows from what is said above that the topical problems of international relations are matters of deep concern to all Churches of the world. The clergy's position, set forth in the documents of these major forums, reflects the aspirations of all believers and their hopes that, as His Holiness Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia has put it, "... all of God's creation could fulfil its mission in history undamaged, glorifying the Lord and serving the good of the human race" (Message of His Holiness Patriarch Pimen to the Participants in the Sixth All-Christian Peace Assembly, July 1, 1985).

We should strengthen the ecumenical movement for the sake of this great goal. Enriched with the experience of past years, we clergymen shall step up our efforts to build the edifice of peace and Christian love. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another," said St. John the Divine (1 John 4:11).

Lay the Foundations of Amity

While in the United States, members of my group and myself were given the title of honorary citizens of two American cities—Fort Worth and Louisville. On my part I consider this to be a great honour bestowed on me both as a citizen of the USSR and as a clergyman representing one of the world's oldest Christian Churches. I should very much like to maintain links with the hospitable residents of these two cities which I liked very much. I hope the Lord will show me the way and I shall see my new American friends again.

I remember well my meetings with Harvey Stone, the Mayor of Louisville, a physician by education. We had a friendly talk on many problems and we shared the opinion that the American and Soviet people must cooperate for the sake of peace and progress on our planet. We recalled that despite their ideological and political differences the Soviet Union and the United States were allies in the great battle against a common enemy—fascism. We agreed that the wartime alliance puts a great responsibility on our two countries and that we must overcome the barriers of misunderstanding and prejudice and embark upon the road of broad cooperation.

At the beginning of May 1985, I sent Harvey Stone the following message:

"Dear Mr. Stone,

"On the day when millions of people across the world are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the great victory over Nazi Germany I as an honorary citizen of your city should like to extend my blessings and my best wishes to my American co-citizens.

"In our prayers devoted to this outstanding event we honoured the memory of the citizens of the city of Sukhumi and Abkhazia and the citizens of Louisville

and your state who had met with untimely death in the Second World War.

"As doctors, you and I are well aware of the real danger of atomic war. Today even the sky is becoming a target of militaristic aspirations.

"So let us do all in our power to save mankind from horrible atomic destruction.

"May the spirit of friendship and understanding which emerged between Soviet and American soldiers on the banks of the Elbe forty years ago be revived for the good of our peoples and world security.

"I pray for the advent of this day!"

It is difficult to say whether there are many Americans who will respond to my call. Young Americans know very little about the cooperation between our two armies in the Second World War. Unfortunately, they know still less about the sufferings and hardships the Soviet people endured before victory over Nazism was achieved. A young Louisville schoolteacher was amazed when I showed her the book *A Medal for Fighting, a Medal for Labour*, which tells about boys aged 10 to 12 who had seen action during the war. Incredible as it may sound, thousands of children fought in partisan units, hundreds of thousands of youngsters worked literally around the clock at munitions factories, helping their mothers make weapons for the front. Whenever I think about them I can hardly suppress my tears—after all, these were the children of my country, my own children.

During the war many children died before reaching adolescence. I know elderly people today who saw their sons and daughters only as children. This horrible tragedy is totally unknown in America. I think that people there, and all over the world for that matter, should know that the Soviet Union, which has experienced so much suffering, sincerely wants to prevent all this from happening again to its own people and to all other nations.

Our feelings on the subject may not be understood by all, of course. The Americans have not heard bombs and shells explode on their soil for a hundred years. This is a great blessing for the people of the United States. I know that the Second World War claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers who had courageously fought against fascism and Japanese militarism. Nevertheless America's civilian population and children were spared the horrors of the Second World War. The present generation of the Americans does not quite realize, therefore, what the arms race, the build-up of international tension and the bid for global supremacy may bring. But those who do realize this must point out again and again that there is no alternative to world peace, to friendship among the peoples. The seeds of goodness, sown at one time by the champions of friendship and understanding, must be cared for rather than wasted.

American and Soviet soldiers embraced one another on the Elbe in May 1945. They were glad that fighting was over, that thanks to their will and courage victory was won. I do not doubt for a moment that the Soviet and American people would readily extend a hand of friendship to each other again but for the doings of those American politicians who are set on undermining detente. Unfortunately, there are quite a few of them.

Most Americans want world peace and cooperation. There can be no doubt about that. I was often asked in the United States what, in my opinion, the American people should do in order to safeguard peace. I replied that it was necessary to have confidence in oneself and in others, to learn more about present-day realities and to explain them to those who do not or do not want to understand them. As for the Soviet Union, I said, it does not want war and will never start one.

This is not only because we realize what war would mean for our people. The world of socialism does not

accept war in general. No one in our country derives profits from arms deliveries, and no one benefits from the arms race. What the country loses, everyone loses. Houses, factories, farms—in a word, everything created by man—are our common property. Consequently, the losses sustained in a war are also common losses; they are every Soviet citizen's losses.

During my trips abroad—and I have been to the United States, Argentina, Canada, Iceland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Turkey, Italy, Switzerland and many other countries—I was convinced again and again that there are many people there who believe in our sincere desire to live in peace with all nations, who believe that we are not interested in war or in the arms race. I reminded to those I talked with that we opposed war from the first day of the existence of our state whose first decree was the Decree on Peace.

Today our peaceableness can be seen not only in the Soviet people's calls for peaceful coexistence and fruitful cooperation but also in the commitments undertaken by our country, above all, the pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and the moratorium on nuclear weapon tests declared by the Soviet Union. It turned out that many people in the United States had never heard of these Soviet initiatives. My interlocutors agreed with me that if all nuclear powers undertook not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, the world's nations could live and work without fear of the future.

Of course, it is difficult to map out the exact road that would lead our two countries to complete understanding. But one thing is clear. If we could build a new edifice of mutual trust on the basis of the alliance formed in the anti-fascist struggle, if our two countries made efforts to preserve peace, if calls for the arms race failed to drown out the voice of reason, then we could say that we have started laying the foundations of friendship.

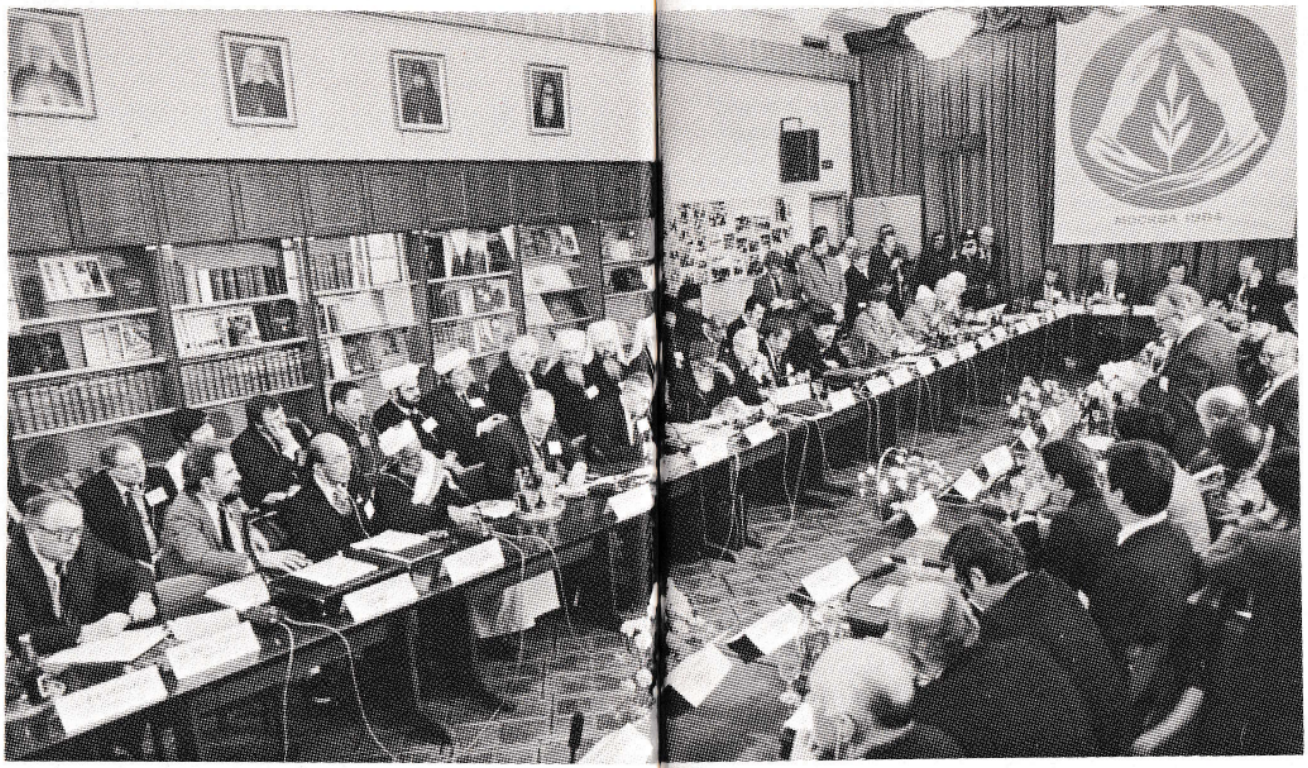
Work Together for Our Future

In fifteen years or so we shall enter the third millennium since the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ. For mankind, the past two thousand years have been a period of great trials on its way to knowledge and the peaks of civilization. But has mankind really learned the teaching of Jesus Christ on peace and love, and are all those who call themselves Christians following this teaching?

The New Testament teaches the Christians the following: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18), and more: "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Romans 15:2). Have all people opened their hearts to this wisdom? If not, has every pastor done his best to explain to his parishioners how important it is today to ease tensions and promote peaceful cooperation between states?

His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Iliya II, expressing the aspirations of all the members of the Georgian Orthodox Church, said in his message of greetings to the participants in the World Conference of Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe, held in Moscow in 1982: "Mankind thirsts for peace; it wearies of constant tension and crises. Mankind thirsts for justice and the reaffirmation of human dignity. It is our responsibility before the world to reduce the danger of war and create conditions for the building of a better world."

Some people say that God will not let the world perish, that He will prevent the development of events from reaching a tragic climax. I believe in the power of the Creator. I am also convinced that millions of people have come to understand that instead of sitting idly by and waiting, we must fight together against the threat of



Dignitaries representing various religions of the world are seen among the participants of the International Round-Table Conference on "Space Without Weapons", Moscow, April 1984

total destruction, and that in this God's will is manifested.

Clergymen in many countries share this view. The call to believers to unite in opposing the arms race and the growth of tension made by the Churches of the world at their peace gatherings has been meeting with increasing response. In this, too, God's will is manifested.

In May 1982, Dr. Arie Brouwer, General Secretary of the Reformed Church in America, said at the World Conference of Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe held in Moscow: "In Christ, we are given hope—even when there is no hope—and we are saved from despair. In Christ, we receive the gift of faith and we are able to believe that the peoples of the earth can live together in peace and justice. In Christ, we are loved without fail, and we learn that to seek to save our lives through military might or any other

means is to lose them, and that to lose our lives in love and service to the world is to save them. In Christ, we protest against the race of death. We choose life and we search for peace across the barriers of different cultures, ideologies and political structures."

Indeed, there is no other way than the way of peace. For the sake of the future we all the nations on earth must remove the barriers of distrust and prejudice that separate us. Our goal is a noble one—to save the sacred gift of life and create the necessary conditions for peaceful pursuits and cooperation. But we must work for the future. To solve the global problems of tomorrow, we must find solutions now to such crucial problems as war and peace, justice and freedom, starvation and destitution. No doubt this will be difficult. But all problems can be resolved if all mankind and its knowledge are placed with the help of God at the service of the morrow.

Some say that it is not easy to unite all people on earth, for they do not share the same religious faith, the same views and ideas. But that is not so, and I shall say why.

There is something that unites ALL PEOPLE WITHOUT EXCEPTION, and that is their DESIRE TO LIVE and to have a LIFE WORTH LIVING.

Even today this idea underlies all movements that unite large numbers of people, for example, the ecumenical movement and the youth movement. It is also making more and more people join these movements. And if they grow into a force capable of preventing a new world war and securing for everyone in Asia, Africa, Latin America, in the Caribbean and Micronesia, in fact, everywhere, a life worthy of man, then we can say: "Yes, we are prepared to meet the future. It will be a happy future for all and it will be filled with love, as our Saviour has willed it."

EPILOGUE

Among my parishioners there is a man with three shell splinters in his chest, a reminder of the last war in which he took part. But the acute pain he has at times felt is mild compared to the suffering of those who, coming home from work, see only the black-bordered photos of their sons or husbands. Part of them died with the death of their loved ones. They will never know the joy experienced by those who lived to greet their nearest and dearest back from the war.

What about those who survived the blockade of Leningrad? It's hard even to imagine the agony of the parents as they watched their young ones die through lack of food and heat. Those nightmares are engraved on the memory of people and can never be obliterated, especially for those who saw them with their own eyes. War leaves horrible wounds, any war. And even after a war has ended, shells and bombs lie hidden for a long time in the ground. They go off all of a sudden, taking people unawares.

At El Alamein, where battles raged between the Allied troops and the troops of Germany and Italy, the guns fell silent in 1942, yet the mines planted then have continued to kill people up to now. Two years later the war ended on the soil of our country. Yet rusty bombs and shells still go off in Byelorussia, the Ukraine and Karelia. Thousands have died from the aftermath of the Second World War, not in battle, but in peacetime conditions. Unfortunately, for decades to come death

will continue to haunt many carefree children in Lebanon, Nicaragua, the Falkland Islands, Vietnam and Korea. One day people may decide to bury their enmity and put a stop to bloodshed, but the deaths of innocent children will go on reminding them of past wars.

It's high time that we put an end to war and suffering. The sooner we eliminate the means of death and destruction, the quicker our descendants will forget what war is. They have to create a new world and embark on a path of new discoveries. For their sake we must act now.

No doubt, great discoveries were made in wartime, too. But, as an old saying has it, where there are floods people have no desire to water flowers. When fighting is going on people cannot concentrate their minds on civilian scientific research. The necessary prerequisite for progress in any sphere of life is peace. Peace is indispensable to the advance of civilization. To cultivate rice, bake bread, sew a shirt, nurse a child or go to sleep—all this requires peace.

But are we always aware of this? Do all of us understand that we must not only pray for peace but also take actions conducive to peace? Do all of us realize what war is and how terrible its consequences are? Do we realize that war maims people both physically and mentally? That babies are born crippled and the thunder of guns does damage to the psyche of children? That war not only lays waste vast fields but destroys whole generations? That war turns the life of those who want to live in peace and enjoy the fruits of their labour into a hell? That war is born of the forces of evil?

Let's work out ways of abolishing wars, establishing peace and justice on earth, and closing at last the long chapter of wars in man's history.

Let's think over the matter seriously. Over a period of 5,000 years about 14,500 big wars were fought, which took four billion lives, equal in number to the present world population. The toll of the last two world wars is

nearly 60 million lives. In this day and age a war, if unleashed, can put an end to man's history altogether.

Does all this mean nothing to us? Are we deaf to the alarm bells tolling?

The following heartfelt appeal made by Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios at the Sixth All-Christian Peace Assembly in Prague seems to me to be the most appropriate conclusion for my book:

"No one nation, however powerful it may be, can impose its will on others by military power. Why is this lesson still unlearnt? Why do some people still seek to achieve military superiority over other nations? Have they not heard? Have they not seen? The human spirit cannot be crushed by the greatest military power on earth. Military power leads only to the apotheosis of hubris—to ruin and destruction. Human beings will not surrender to military power. A Grenada may be kept under the heel for a little while, but many Cubas and Nicaraguas will rise without great military power, to voice the protest of the human spirit. It is folly to seek such military superiority and such madness can only lead to self-destruction and a holocaust. Let us as a single humanity rise up to say to all nations and governments:

"Stoop not to the folly of seeking
military superiority! Seek not to
uphold positions of economic privilege
by military power!
Seek ye rather peace and worldwide
cooperation! Seek ye rather to use
space peacefully. Seek ye to devote
our science and our technology to banish
poverty and ignorance, ill-health and
war from the face of the earth! We
are one humanity, members of one family.
Let us live in peace. Let us work together
in peace. Stoop not to the folly of war.
God calls—Choose life. The hour is late."

AFTERWORD

by Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Byelorussia

His Eminence Metropolitan David of Sukhumi and Abkhazia, whose book you have just read, heads the Georgian Patriarchate's Department of External Affairs, and is well known for his work in the ecumenical and peace movements.

Metropolitan David has taken an active part in all peace conferences sponsored by the Russian Orthodox Church which has a high regard for his work as a peacemaker.

His book discusses the moral and ethical principles of Christianity, formulated by the author as exhortations to goodness, brotherhood and fellowship. The author also considers the world's current problems as a Christian, religious leader and archpriest, and as a peacemaker who is deeply convinced of the importance of his mission. In unambiguous terms he states his views on the struggle between the power of evil which is responsible for the arms race, and the power of good capable of halting mankind's drift towards disaster.

For Metropolitan David every human being is a unique personality and also his neighbour whose joys and sorrows he shares and whom he wishes happiness and prosperity. He draws the reader's attention to the tragic lot of those of our brothers and sisters in Christ who live in the Third World and lack not only the benefits of civilization but also daily bread. Meanwhile enormous resources are being wasted on the arms race. His heart goes out to the needy no matter where they

are—in the Middle East, Southern Africa, Afghanistan or Namibia.

The author believes that to work for peace means to show concern for the well-being of one's neighbour, and that peacemaking is one of the most important tasks facing a pastor today. He is profoundly convinced that only the concerted actions of all people of goodwill can defeat our common foe—nuclear threat and prevent nuclear destruction.

Metropolitan David makes the important point that it is not so much the dread of a nuclear war that impels its opponents to action as the scale of the tragedy that could befall us if all-devastating nuclear weapons should ever be used.

Metropolitan David discusses many global problems such as hunger and poverty, which are directly related to the arms race and which affect hundreds of millions of people. He states the position of the Church on combatting evil in the world, evil which takes various forms—the arms race, racism, apartheid, epidemics and hunger. Metropolitan David stresses the importance of the support given by clergymen throughout the world to the nations fighting against neocolonialism and neofascism and against the degradation of the environment.

Metropolitan David is deeply convinced that contacts between people can create trust between them, that they facilitate an unbiased assessment of events, which helps expose false information and promotes ecumenical and friendly ties among nations. He considers more contacts between the people of the Soviet Union and the United States to be particularly important and points out that authentic information about our country, specifically the status of the Church and civil rights and religious freedoms here, obtained first-hand and not distorted by some Western media, can improve Soviet-American relations.

The author believes that cooperation between Chris-

tians in upholding peace and the very fact that the Churches are working together for peace promote the ecumenical movement.

Metropolitan David's book is in accord with the spirit of the times and is permeated with concern for preserving peace and eliminating tensions, and is therefore an important contribution to the world peace movement.

The Church is committed to peacemaking. Christ said: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). We see today how more and more clergymen are joining the world peace movement.

In our effort to promote peace we work not only with Christian churches, but also with representatives of other major religions. The inter-religious peace movement is steadily gaining strength. A good example is the World Conference of Religious Workers for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from Nuclear Catastrophe sponsored by the Russian Orthodox Church and held in Moscow in May 1982. It has been followed up by annual round-table conferences attended by religious leaders, theologians and experts from various countries. At these meetings the most urgent and vital issues of world peace are discussed.

In the light of the Soviet-American Summits the Metropolitan's book becomes still more significant.

I hope that this book will be read in the same spirit of trust in which the author has written it, and that the seeds of trust, falling onto good ground, will bear forth fruit.

WHEN I SET OUT TO WRITE THIS BOOK, I HOPED TO ANSWER MANY QUESTIONS THAT HAD TROUBLED ME. BUT AS IT TURNED OUT, THE PROBLEMS CONSIDERED IN THE BOOK, I AM CONVINCED, TROUBLE MANY OTHERS AS WELL. SO MUCH THE BETTER THEN, SINCE TOGETHER WE CAN FIND A WAY TO TRUTH MUCH MORE QUICKLY.

Metropolitan David